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RIVERSIDE LITERATURE SERIES

Riverside Second Reader

HANS ANDERSEN'S STORIES

NEWLY TRANSLATED

IN TWO PARTS

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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By H. E. S

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PREFACE.

THE bits of genuine literature which a child first comes to know, when he reads for himself, are fables and folk stories, the production of the world in its own period of childhood. He finds no author's name attached to these save the almost impersonal one of Æsop, and he never thinks of authorship in connection with this literature. If he asks the origin of what he reads, he is told that the stories were told once upon a time, dim ages ago.

By and by he begins to hear names of authors, and to associate this or that story, or poem, with some particular personality, and his interest is quickened it may be by learning that the author is still living, perhaps he is in his own neighborhood; and finally, in his school exercises, his attention is drawn almost away from literature to the creators of literature, and he joins with his companions in celebrating the praises of some author upon his birthday.

Now there is a writer of our own time whose work furnishes a connecting link between the

literature which is nameless and that which is identified with personality. Hans Christian Andersen, the Dane, who was born April 2, 1805, and died August 4, 1875, has created forms of literature consciously which are very closely allied to the stories which have been rolled over and over in the minds of people until, acquiring a certain consistency and soundness, they have lost all individuality of authorship. It is but a step from fables and folk stories to Hans Andersen's stories, and but another step from Hans Andersen's stories to the abundant literature which is simple in spirit and closely associated with the names of its authors.

It is worth while to note briefly the difference between Andersen's little stories and the fables with which they have something in common. The end of every fable is "Moral;" it was for this end that the fable was created. The lion, the fox, the mouse, the dog, are in a very limited way true to the accepted nature of the animals which they represent, and their intercourse with each other is governed by the ordinary rules of animal life, but the actions and words are distinctly illustrative of some morality. The fable is an animated proverb. The lesson is first; the characters, created afterward, are, for purposes of the teacher, disguised as animals; very little of the animal appears, but very much of the les-

son. The child's mind, however much he may be entertained by the action of the little story, is pretty sure to apply the moral of it, and to say "sour grapes," for example, with considerable emphasis very soon after reading *The Fox and the Bunch of Grapes.*

In Andersen's stories the spring is not in the didactic, but in the imaginative. He sees the beetle in the imperial stable stretching out his thin legs to be shod with golden shoes like the emperor's favorite horse, and the personality of the beetle determines the movement of the story throughout; egotism, pride at being proud, jealousy, and boundless self-conceit are the furniture of this beetle's soul, and his adventures one by one disclose his character. Is there a lesson is all this? Precisely as there is a lesson in any picture of human life where the same traits are sketched. The beetle, after all his adventures, some of them ignominious, but none expelling his self-conceit, finds himself again in the emperor's stable, having solved the problem why the emperor's horse had golden shoes. "The horse got them for my sake," he says, and adds, "The world is not so bad upon the whole; but one must know how to take it."

One test of the lasting value of Andersen's stories is to be found in the charm and the new meaning which await the mature reader who has

already in earlier years made their acquaintance. The story of *The Ugly Duckling*, for example, is an inimitable presentation of Andersen's own tearful and finally triumphant life; yet no child who reads this story has his sympathy for a moment withdrawn from the duckling and transferred to a human being. It is only when, later in life, he reads the story with a knowledge not of Andersen's history alone, but of much human experience, that he discovers what an apologue is in the little narrative.

A prime advantage in an early acquaintance with Andersen springs from the stimulus which his quaint fancy gives to the budding imagination of childhood. It may be said without exaggeration that Andersen truly represents creative childhood in literature. The power of animating dumb and inanimate objects is a common property of childhood, which not only invests the simulacra of life with life, making dolls real people, but turns the most unlikely objects into the puppets of imagination; a stick becomes a horse if one only ride it, and spools are made lively *dramatis personæ*. What every child is likely to do in this way, Andersen does with delightful art, and a darning-needle, a top, a ball, the flower of the field, all have an active and a consistent life that springs from a thoroughly artistic sense in the mind of their creator. It is

this nice sympathy held by Andersen with the peculiar phase of childhood which makes his writings so eminently fit for the reading of children; in entering his world they do not pass out of their own but enlarge it, for by the means of his art they are introduced to the larger art of imaginative literature.

It is interesting to observe that Andersen began the compositions which have won him his special fame by writing out the folk stories which he had heard as a child. Then he made one or two inventions in the same order, and then through the native bent of his own childish nature fell to endowing ordinary and inanimate objects with imagined vitality, giving one the impression that he is looking at life through the reverse end of an opera glass. At first the critics were puzzled by this new form of literature and advised him to waste no more time over such work. He was half ashamed himself, but said: "I would willingly have discontinued writing them, but they forced themselves from me," and it was not long before old and young received them with avidity. No Christmas tree was grown unless some of this fruit hung from it; every Christmas for years there came out in Copenhagen one of the little volumes of these stories. They became the fashion, and actors declaimed the stories from the stage as interludes between the larger pieces.

Andersen tells in his autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, a pleasing little incident which hints at the popularity which he enjoyed during his lifetime. He was at Hamburg, where the German translator of his stories lived. "Otto Speckter," he says, "who is full of genius, surprised me by his bold, glorious drawings for my stories; he had made a whole collection of them, six only of which were known to me. . . . I wished one evening to go to the theatre; it was scarcely a quarter of an hour before the commencement of the opera. Speckter accompanied me, and on our way we came to an elegant house.

"'We must first go in here, dear friend,' said he; 'a wealthy family lives here, friends of mine, and friends of your stories; the children will be happy.'

"'But the opera!' said I.

"'Only for two minutes,' returned he, and drew me into the house, mentioned my name, and a circle of children gathered around me.

"'And now give us a story,' said Speckter, 'only one.'

"I told one, and then hastened away to the theatre.

"'That was an extraordinary visit,' said I.

"'An excellent one; one entirely out of the common way!' said he, exultingly. 'Only think! the children are full of Andersen and his stories;

he suddenly makes his appearance amongst them, tells one of them himself, and then is gone! vanished! That is of itself like a fairy tale to the children, that will remain vividly in the remembrance.' I myself was amused by it."

The Story of My Life has many illustrations of the fact that Andersen was a grown-up child, and the accounts given of him by others all confirm the same impression. He was easily moved by praise or blame; he wished to be petted by others, and when he was neglected, he acted often like a spoiled child. He never married, but there were many houses in which he was as one of the family. Indeed, at one time he was wont to dine at seven different houses on the successive days of the week, month in, month out. He wrote a large number of books, other than those for children, novels and romances, poems and dramas, the one book best known being *The Improvisatore*, a romance of life in Italy. His statue stands in one of the public gardens of Copenhagen, and children play about it, and look up into the kind, homely face of the great story-teller, who is represented book in hand, and finger uplifted, as if he were calling on them to listen while he told them one of his little stories.

Andersen's stories found their way early into German and into English dress, and it was one

of the pleasures of his old age that he wrote new wonder stories expressly for an American magazine, *The Riverside Magazine for Young People.* In bringing out the present collection, mainly with reference to use in schools, the editor has availed himself of earlier translations, but has sought by reference to the Danish to come closer to the original, simple, unaffected style of the great children's story-teller.

H. E. S.

CONTENTS.

HANS ANDERSEN'S STORIES.

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

I.

THE DUCKLING IS BORN.

It was glorious in the country; it was summer; the corn-fields were yellow, the oats were green, the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows; and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his mother. All around the fields and meadows were great woods, and in the midst of these woods deep lakes. Yes, it was right glorious in the country.

In the midst of the sunshine there lay an old farm, with deep canals about it; and from the wall down to the water grew great burdocks, so high that little children could stand upright under the tallest of them. It was just as wild there as in the deepest wood, and here sat a

Duck upon her nest; she had to hatch her ducklings; but she was almost tired out before the little ones came; and she seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked better to swim about in the canals than to run up to sit under a burdock, and gabble with her.

At last one egg-shell after another burst open. "Pip! pip!" each cried, and in all the eggs there were little things that stuck out their heads.

"Quack! quack!" said the Duck, and they all came quacking out as fast as they could, looking all around them under the green leaves; and the mother let them look as much as they liked, for green is good for the eye.

"How wide the world is!" said all the young ones; for they certainly had much more room now than when they were inside the eggs.

"D' ye think this is all the world?" said the mother. "That stretches far across the other side of the garden, quite into the parson's field; but I have never been there yet. I hope you are all together," and she stood up. "No, I have not all. The largest egg still lies there. How long is that to last? I am really tired of it." And so she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an old Duck who had come to pay her a visit.

"It lasts a long time with this one egg," said

the Duck who sat there. "It will not open. Now, only look at the others! They are the prettiest little ducks I ever saw. They are all like their father: the rogue, he never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg which will not burst," said the old Duck. "You may be sure it is a turkey's egg. I was once cheated in that way, and had much care and trouble with the young ones, for they are afraid of the water. Must I say it to you? I could not make them go in. I quacked, and I clacked, but it was no use. Let me see the egg. Yes, that's a turkey's egg. Let it lie there, and do you teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck. "I've sat so long now that I can sit a few days more."

"Just as you please," said the old Duck; and she went away.

At last the great egg burst. "Pip! pip!" said the little one, and crept forth. He was so big and ugly. The Duck looked at him.

"It's a very large Duckling," said she. "None of the others looks like that; it really must be a turkey chick! Well, we shall soon find out. Into the water shall he go, even if I have to push him in."

II.

HOW THE DUCKLING WAS TREATED AT HOME.

The next day, it was bright, beautiful weather; the sun shone on all the green burdocks. The Mother-Duck with all her family went down to the canal. Splash! she jumped into the water. "Quack! quack!" she said, and one duckling after another plumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up in an instant, and swam off finely; their legs went of themselves, and they were all in the water; even the ugly gray Duckling swam with them.

"No, it's not a turkey," said she; "look how well he uses his legs, how straight he holds himself. It is my own child! On the whole he's quite pretty, when one looks at him rightly. Quack! quack! come now with me, and I'll lead you out into the world, and present you in the duck-yard; but keep close to me all the time, so that no one may tread on you, and look out for the cats."

And so they came into the duck-yard. There was a terrible row going on in there, for two families were fighting about an eel's head, and so the cat got it.

"See, that's the way it goes in the world!" said the Mother-Duck; and she whetted her

beak, for she too wanted the eel's head. "Only use your legs," she said. "See that you can bustle about, and bend your necks before the old Duck yonder. She's the grandest of all here; she's of Spanish blood — that's why she's so fat; and do you see? she has a red rag around her leg; that's something very, very fine, and the greatest mark of honor a duck can have: it means that one does not want to lose her, and that she's known by the animals and by men too. Hurry! hurry! — don't turn in your toes; a well brought-up duck turns its toes quite out, just like father and mother, — so! Now bend your necks and say 'Quack!'"

And they did so: but the other ducks round about looked at them, and said quite boldly, —

"Look there! now we're to have this crowd too! as if there were not enough of us already! And — fie! — how that Duckling yonder looks; we won't stand that!" And at once one duck flew at him, and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing anything to any one."

"Yes, but he's too large and odd," said the Duck who had bitten him, "and so he must be put down."

"Those are pretty children the mother has," said the old Duck with the rag round her leg. "They're all pretty but that one; that is rather

unlucky. I wish she could have that one over again."

"That cannot be done, my lady," said the Mother-Duck. "He is not pretty, but he has a really good temper, and swims as well as any of the others; yes, I may even say it, a little better. I think he will grow up pretty, perhaps in time he will grow a little smaller; he lay too long in the egg, and therefore he has not quite the right shape." And she pinched him in the neck, and smoothed his feathers. "Beside, he is a drake," she said, "and so it does not matter much. I think he will be very strong: he makes his way already."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old Duck. "Make yourself at home; and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it to me."

And now they were at home. But the poor Duckling who had crept last out of the egg, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and made fun of, as much by the ducks as by the chickens.

"He is too big!" they all said. And the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs, and so thought he was an emperor, blew himself up, like a ship in full sail, and bore straight down upon him; then he gobbled and grew quite red in the face. The poor Duckling did not know where he dared stand or walk; he was quite

unhappy because he looked ugly, and was the sport of the whole duck-yard.

So it went on the first day; and then it grew worse and worse. The poor Duckling was hunted about by every one; even his brothers and sisters were quite angry with him, and said, "If the cat would only catch you, you ugly creature!" And the ducks bit him, and the chickens beat him, and the girl who had to feed the poultry kicked at him with her foot.

III.

OUT ON THE MOOR.

Then he ran and flew over the fence, and the little birds in the bushes flew up in fear.

"That is because I am so ugly!" thought the Duckling; and he shut his eyes, but flew on further; and so he came out into the great moor, where the wild ducks lived. Here he lay the whole night long, he was so tired and sad.

Toward morning the wild ducks flew up, and looked at their new mate.

"What sort of a one are you?" they asked; and the Duckling turned about to each, and bowed as well as he could. "You are really very ugly!" said the Wild Ducks. "But that

is all the same to us, so long as you do not marry into our family."

Poor thing! he certainly did not think of marrying, and only dared ask leave to lie among the reeds and drink some of the swamp water.

There he lay two whole days; then came thither two wild geese, or more truly, two wild ganders. It was not long since each had crept out of an egg, and that's why they were so saucy.

"Listen, comrade," said one of them. "You 're so ugly that I like you. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Near here is another moor, where are a few sweet lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and all able to say 'Quack!' You 've a chance of making your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Piff! paff!" sounded through the air; and both the ganders fell down dead in the reeds, and the water became blood red. "Piff! paff!" it sounded again, and the whole flock of wild geese flew up from the reeds. And then there was another report. A great hunt was going on. The gunners lay around in the moor, and some were even sitting up in the branches of the trees, which spread far over the reeds. The blue smoke rose like clouds in among the dark trees, and hung over the water; and the hunting dogs came — splash, splash! — into the mud, and the

rushes and reeds bent down on every side. That was a fright for the poor Duckling! He turned his head to put it under his wing; and at that very moment a frightful great dog stood close by the Duckling. His tongue hung far out of his mouth, and his eyes glared horribly. He put his nose close to the Duckling, showed his sharp teeth, and — splash, splash! — on he went without seizing it.

"Oh, Heaven be thanked!" sighed the Duckling. "I am so ugly that even the dog does not like to bite me!"

And so he lay quite quiet, while the shots rattled through the reeds and gun after gun was fired. At last, late in the day, all was still; but the poor little thing did not dare to rise up; he waited several hours still before he looked around, and then hurried away out of the moor as fast as he could. He ran on over field and meadow; there was a storm so that he had hard work to get away.

IV.

IN THE PEASANT'S HUT.

Towards evening the Duckling came to a peasant's poor little hut; it was so tumbled down that it did not itself know on which side it

should fall; and that's why it stood up. The storm whistled around the Duckling in such a way that he had to sit down to keep from blowing away; and the wind blew worse and worse. Then he noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that he could slip through the crack into the room; and that is what he did.

Here lived an old woman, with her Cat and her Hen. And the Cat, whom she called Sonnie, could arch his back and purr; he could even give out sparks; but for that, one had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The Hen had quite small, short legs, and therefore she was called Chickabiddy Shortshanks; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning they noticed at once the strange Duckling, and the Cat began to purr and the Hen to cluck.

"What's this?" said the woman, and looked all around; but she could not see well, and therefore she thought the Duckling was a fat duck that had strayed. "This is a rare prize!" she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that."

And so the Duckling was taken on trial for three weeks, but no eggs came. And the Cat was master of the house, and the Hen was the

lady, and always said "We and the world!" for they thought they were half the world, and by far the better half. It seemed to the Duckling that one might have another mind, but the Hen would not allow it.

"Can you lay eggs?"

"No."

"Then will you hold your tongue!"

And the Cat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?"

"No."

"Then you will please have no opinion of your own when sensible folks are speaking!"

And the Duckling sat in a corner and was in low spirits; then he began to think of the fresh air and the sunshine; and he was seized with such a strange longing to swim on the water, that he could not help telling the Hen of it.

"What are you thinking of?" cried the Hen. "You have nothing to do, that's why you have these fancies. Lay eggs, or purr, and they will pass over."

"But it is so charming to swim in the water," said the Duckling, "so nice to feel it go over one's head, and to dive down to the bottom!"

"Yes, that's a fine thing, truly," said the Hen. "You are clean gone crazy. Ask the Cat about it, — he 's the cleverest thing I know, — ask him if he likes to swim in the water, or to

dive down: I won't speak about myself. Ask our mistress herself, the old woman; no one in the world knows more than she. Do you think she wants to swim, and to let the water close above her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling.

"We don't understand you! Then pray who is to understand you? You surely don't pretend to be cleverer than the Cat and the woman — I won't say anything of myself. Don't make a fool of yourself, child, and thank your Maker for all the good you have. Are you not come into a warm room, and have you not folks about you from whom you can learn something? But you are a goose, and it is not pleasant to have you about. You may believe me, I speak for your good. I tell you things you won't like, and by that one may always know one's true friends! Only take care that you learn to lay eggs, or to purr, and to give out sparks!"

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the Duckling.

"Yes, do go," replied the Hen.

And so the Duckling went away. He swam on the water, and dived, but he was shunned by every creature because he was so ugly.

V.

WHAT BECAME OF THE DUCKLING.

Now came the fall of the year. The leaves in the wood turned yellow and brown; the wind caught them so that they danced about, and up in the air it was very cold. The clouds hung low, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, and on the fence stood the raven, crying, "Croak! croak!" for mere cold; yes, one could freeze fast if one thought about it. The poor little Duckling certainly had not a good time. One evening — the sun was just going down in fine style — there came a whole flock of great handsome birds out of the bushes; they were shining white, with long, supple necks; they were swans. They uttered a very strange cry, spread forth their glorious great wings, and flew away from that cold region to warmer lands, to fair open lakes. They mounted so high, so high! and the ugly Duckling had such a strange feeling as he saw them! He turned round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry, so high, so strange, that he feared as he heard it. Oh! he could not forget those beautiful, happy birds; and as soon as he could see them no longer, he dived down to the very bottom, and when he

came up again, he was quite beside himself. He did not know what the birds were, nor where they were flying to; but he loved them more than he had ever loved any one. He did not envy them at all. How could he think of wishing to have such loveliness as they had? He would have been glad if only the ducks would have let him be among them — the poor, ugly creature!

And the winter grew so cold, so cold! The Duckling had to swim about in the water, to keep it from freezing over; but every night the hole in which he swam about became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the icy cover sounded; and the Duckling had to use his legs all the time to keep the hole from freezing tight. At last he became worn out, and lay quite still, and thus froze fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came by, and found him there; he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice to pieces, and carried the Duckling home to his wife. Then the Duckling came to himself again. The children wanted to play with him; but he thought they wanted to hurt him, and in his terror he flew up into the milk-pan, so that the milk spilled over into the room. The woman screamed and shook her hand in the air, at which the Duckling flew down into the tub where they kept the butter,

and then into the meal-barrel and out again. How he looked then! The woman screamed, and struck at him with the fire tongs; the children tumbled over one another as they tried to catch the Duckling; and they laughed and they screamed! — well was it that the door stood open, and the poor creature was able to slip out between the bushes into the newly-fallen snow — there he lay quite worn out.

But it would be too sad if I were to tell all the misery and care which the Duckling had to bear in the hard winter. He lay out on the moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again and the larks to sing; it was a beautiful spring.

Then all at once the Duckling could flap his wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore him stoutly away; and before he well knew it, he found himself in a great garden, where the elder-trees stood in flower, and bent their long green branches down to the winding canal, and the lilacs smelt sweet. Oh, here it was beautiful, fresh, and springlike! and from the thicket came three glorious white swans; they rustled their wings, and sat lightly on the water. The Duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt a strange sadness.

"I will fly away to them, to the royal birds! and they will beat me, because I, that am so

ugly, dare to come near them. But it is all the same. Better to be killed by them than to be chased by ducks, and beaten by fowls, and pushed about by the girl who takes care of the poultry yard, and to suffer hunger in winter!" And he flew out into the water, and swam toward the beautiful swans: these looked at him, and came sailing down upon him with outspread wings. "Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent his head down upon the water, and waited for death. But what saw he in the clear water? He saw below him his own image; and, lo! it was no longer a clumsy dark-gray bird, ugly and hateful to look at, but — a swan!

It matters nothing if one is born in a duck-yard, if one has only lain in a swan's egg.

He felt quite glad at all the need and hard times he had borne; now he could joy in his good luck in all the brightness that was round him. And the great swans swam round him and stroked him with their beaks.

Into the garden came little children, who threw bread and corn into the water; and the youngest cried "There is a new one!" and the other children shouted, "Yes, a new one has come!" And they clapped their hands and danced about, and ran to their father and mother; and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, "The new one is the

most beautiful of all! so young and so handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy, and yet not at all proud, for a good heart is never proud. He thought how he had been driven about and mocked and despised; and now he heard them all saying that he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. And the lilacs bent their branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried from the depths of his heart, —

"I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was the Ugly Duckling."

THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA.

THERE was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she was to be a real princess. So he traveled about, all through the world, to find a real one, but everywhere there was something in the way. There were princesses enough, but whether they were real princesses he could not quite make out: there was always something that did not seem quite right. So he came home again, and was quite sad: for he wished so much to have a real princess.

One evening a great storm came on. It lightened and thundered, the rain streamed down; it was quite fearful! Then there was a knocking at the town gate, and the old King went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside the gate. But, mercy! how she looked, from the rain and rough weather! The water ran down from her hair and her clothes; it ran in at the points of her shoes, and out at the heels; and yet she said she was a real princess.

"Yes, we will soon find that out," thought the old Queen. But she said nothing, only

went into the bed-chamber, took all the bedding off, and put a pea on the bottom of the bedstead; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them upon the pea, and then twenty eider-down beds upon the mattresses.

On this the Princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

"Oh, miserably!" said the Princess. "I scarcely closed my eyes all night long. Goodness knows what was in my bed. I lay upon something hard, so that I am black and blue all over. It is quite dreadful!"

So they saw that she was a real princess, for through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds she had felt the pea. No one could be so tender but a real princess.

So the Prince took her for his wife, for now he knew he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum; there it is now, unless some one has carried it off.

Look you, that was a real story.

THE PINE-TREE.

I.

WHEN IT WAS LITTLE.

Out in the woods stood such a nice little Pine-tree; he had a good place; the sun could get at him; there was fresh air enough; and round him grew many big comrades, both pines and firs. But the little Pine wanted so very much to be a grown-up tree.

He did not think of the warm sun and of the fresh air, he did not care for the little cottage-children who ran about and prattled when they were looking for wild strawberries and raspberries. Often they came with a whole jug full, or had their strawberries strung on a straw, and sat down near the little Tree and said, "Oh, what a nice little fellow!" This was what the Tree could not bear to hear.

The year after he had shot up a good deal, and the next year after he was still bigger; for with pine-trees one can always tell by the shoots how many years old they are.

"Oh, were I but such a big tree as the others are," sighed the little Tree. "Then I could spread my branches so far, and with the tops look out into the wide world! Birds would build nests among my branches; and when there was a breeze, I could nod as grandly as the others there."

He had no delight at all in the sunshine, or in the birds, or the red clouds which morning and evening sailed above him.

When now it was winter and the snow all around lay glittering white, a hare would often come leaping along, and jump right over the little Tree. Oh, that made him so angry! But two winters went by, and with the third the Tree was so big that the hare had to go round it. "Oh, to grow, to grow, to become big and old, and be tall," thought the Tree: "that, after all, is the most delightful thing in the world!"

In autumn the wood-cutters always came and felled some of the largest trees. This happened every year, and the young Pine-tree, that was now quite well grown, trembled at the sight; for the great stately trees fell to the earth with noise and cracking, the branches were lopped off, and the trees looked quite bare, they were so long and thin; you would hardly know them for trees, and then they were laid on carts, and horses dragged them out of the wood.

Where did they go to? What became of them?

In spring, when the Swallow and the Stork came, the Tree asked them, "Don't you know where they have been taken? Have you not met them anywhere?"

The Swallow did not know anything about it; but the Stork looked doubtful, nodded his head, and said, "Yes; I have it; I met many new ships as I was flying from Egypt; on the ships were splendid masts, and I dare say it was they that smelt so of pine. I wish you joy, for they lifted themselves on high in fine style!"

"Oh, were I but old enough to fly across the sea! How does the sea really look? and what is it like?"

"Ay, that takes a long time to tell," said the Stork, and away he went.

"Rejoice in thy youth!" said the Sunbeams, "rejoice in thy hearty growth, and in the young life that is in thee!"

And the Wind kissed the Tree, and the Dew wept tears over him, but the Pine-tree understood it not.

II.

CHRISTMAS IN THE WOODS.

When Christmas came, quite young trees were cut down; trees which were not even so large or of the same age as this Pine-tree, who had no rest or peace, but always wanted to be off. These young trees, and they were always the finest looking, always kept their branches; they were laid on carts, and the horses drew them out of the wood.

"Where are they going to?" asked the Pine-tree. "They are not taller than I; there was one indeed that was much shorter; — and why do they keep all their branches? Where are they carrying them to?"

"We know! we know!" chirped the Sparrows. "We have peeped in at the windows down there in the town. We know where they are carrying them to. Oh, they are going to where it is as bright and splendid as you can think! We peeped through the windows, and saw them planted in the middle of the warm room, and dressed with the most splendid things, — with gilded apples, with gingerbread, with toys and many hundred lights!"

"And then?" asked the Pine-tree, and he trembled in every bough. "And then? What happens then?"

"We did not see anything more: it beat everything!"

"I wonder if I am to sparkle like that!" cried the Tree, rejoicing. "That is still better than to go over the sea! How I do suffer for very longing! Were Christmas but come! I am now tall, and stretch out like the others that were carried off last year! Oh, if I were already on the cart! I wish I were in the warm room with all the splendor and brightness. And then? Yes; then will come something better, something still grander, or why should they dress me out so? There must come something better, something still grander, — but what? Oh, how I long, how I suffer! I do not know myself what is the matter with me!"

"Rejoice in us!" said the Air and the Sunlight; "rejoice in thy fresh youth out here in the open air!"

But the Tree did not rejoice at all; he grew and grew; and he stood there in all his greenery; rich green was he winter and summer. People that saw him said, "That 's a fine tree!" and toward Christmas he was the first that was cut down. The axe struck deep into the very pith; the Tree fell to the earth with a sigh: he felt a pang — it was like a swoon; he could not think of happiness, for he was sad at being parted from his home, from the place where he

had sprung up. He well knew that he should never see his dear old comrades, the little bushes and flowers around him, any more; perhaps not even the birds! The setting off was not at all pleasant.

The Tree only came to himself when he was unloaded in a courtyard with other trees, and heard a man say, "That one is splendid! we don't want the others." Then two servants came in rich livery and carried the Pine-tree into a large and splendid room. Portraits were hanging on the walls, and near the white porcelain stove stood two large Chinese vases with lions on the covers. There, too, were large easy-chairs, silken sofas, large tables full of picture-books, and full of toys worth a hundred times a hundred dollars — at least so the children said. And the Pine-tree was stuck upright in a cask filled with sand: but no one could see that it was a cask, for green cloth was hung all around it, and it stood on a gayly colored carpet. Oh, how the Tree quivered! What was to happen? The servants, as well as the young ladies, dressed it. On one branch there hung little nets cut out of colored paper; each net was filled with sugar-plums; gilded apples and walnuts hung as though they grew tightly there, and more than a hundred little red, blue, and white tapers were stuck fast into the branches. Dolls that looked

for all the world like men — the Tree had never seen such things before — fluttered among the leaves, and at the very top a large star of gold tinsel was fixed. It was really splendid — splendid beyond telling.

"This evening!" said they all; "how it will shine this evening!"

"Oh," thought the Tree, "if it were only evening! If the tapers were but lighted! And then I wonder what will happen! I wonder if the other trees from the forest will come to look at me! I wonder if the sparrows will beat against the window-panes! I wonder if I shall take root here, and stand dressed so winter and summer!"

Ay, ay, much he knew about the matter! but he had a real back-ache for sheer longing, and a back-ache with trees is the same thing as a headache with us.

III.

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOUSE.

The candles were now lighted. What brightness! What splendor! The Tree trembled so in every bough that one of the tapers set fire to a green branch. It blazed up splendidly.

Now the Tree did not even dare to tremble.

That was a fright! He was so afraid of losing something of all his finery, that he was quite confused amidst the glare and brightness; and now both folding-doors opened, and a troop of children rushed in as if they would tip the whole Tree over. The older folks came quietly behind; the little ones stood quite still, but only for a moment; then they shouted so that the whole place echoed their shouts, they danced round the Tree, and one present after another was pulled off.

"What are they about?" thought the Tree. "What is to happen now?" And the lights burned down to the very branches, and as they burned down they were put out one after the other, and then the children had leave to plunder the Tree. Oh, they rushed upon it so that it cracked in all its limbs; if its tip-top with the gold star on it had not been fastened to the ceiling, it would have tumbled over.

The children danced about with their pretty toys: no one looked at the Tree except the old nurse, who peeped in among the branches; but it was only to see if there was a fig or an apple that had been forgotten.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, and they dragged a little fat man toward the Tree. He sat down under it, and said, "Now we are in the shade, and the Tree can hear very well

too. But I shall tell only one story. Now which will you have: that about Ivedy-Avedy, or about Klumpy-Dumpy who tumbled down stairs, and came to the throne after all, and married the princess?"

"Ivedy-Avedy," cried some; "Klumpy-Dumpy," cried the others. There was such a bawling and screaming! — the Pine-Tree alone was silent, and he thought to himself, "Am I not to bawl with the rest? — am I to do nothing whatever?" for he was one of them, and he had done what he had to do.

And the man told about Klumpy-Dumpy who tumbled down stairs, and came to the throne after all, and married the princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried out, "Go on, go on!" They wanted to hear about Ivedy-Avedy too, but the little man only told them about Klumpy-Dumpy. The Pine-tree stood quite still and thoughtful: the birds in the wood had never told anything like this. "Klumpy-Dumpy fell down stairs, and yet he married the princess! Yes, yes! that 's the way of the world!" thought the Pine-tree, and he believed it all, because it was such a nice man who told the story.

"Well, well! who knows, perhaps I may fall down stairs too, and so get a princess!" And he looked forward with joy to the next day when

he should be decked out with lights and toys, fruits and tinsel.

"To-morrow I won't tremble!" thought the Pine-tree. "I will enjoy to the full all my splendor! To-morrow I shall hear again the story of Klumpy-Dumpy, and perhaps that of Ivedy-Avedy too." And the whole night the Tree stood still in deep thought.

In the morning the servant and the maid came in.

IV.

IN THE ATTIC.

"Now all the finery will begin again," thought the Pine. But they dragged him out of the room, and up the stairs into the attic; and here in a dark corner, where no daylight could enter, they left him. "What's the meaning of this?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I see and hear now, I wonder?" And he leaned against the wall and stood and thought and thought. And plenty of time, he had, for days and nights passed, and nobody came up; and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put some great trunks in the corner. There stood the Tree quite hidden; it seemed as if he had been entirely forgotten.

"'T is now winter out-of-doors!" thought the Tree. "The earth is hard and covered with snow; men cannot plant me now; therefore I have been put up here under cover till spring! How thoughtful that is! How good men are, after all! If it were not so dark here, and so terribly lonely! Not even a hare. Out there it was so pleasant in the woods, when the snow was on the ground, and the hare leaped by; yes — even when he jumped over me; but I did not like it then. It is terribly lonely here!"

"Squeak! squeak!" said a little Mouse at the same moment, peeping out of his hole. And then another little one came. They snuffed about the Pine-tree, and rustled among the branches.

"It is dreadfully cold," said the little Mouse. "But for that, it would be delightful here, old Pine, would n't it!"

"I am by no means old," said the Pine-tree. "There are many a good deal older than I am."

"Where do you come from?" asked the Mice; "and what can you do?" They were so very curious. "Tell us about the most beautiful spot on earth. Have you been there? Were you ever in the larder, where cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from above; where one dances about on tallow candles; where one goes in lean and comes out fat?"

"I don't know that place," said the Tree. "But I know the wood where the sun shines, and where the little birds sing." And then he told his story from his youth up; and the little Mice had never heard the like before; and they listened and said, —

"Well, to be sure! How much you have seen! How happy you must have been!"

"I!" said the Pine-tree, and he thought over what he had himself told. "Yes, really those were happy times." And then he told about Christmas Eve, when he was decked out with cakes and candles.

"Oh," said the little Mice, "how lucky you have been, old Pine-tree!"

"I am not at all old," said he. "I came from the wood this winter; I am in my prime, and am only rather short of my age."

"What delightful stories you know!" said the Mice: and the next night they came with four other little Mice, who were to hear what the Tree had to tell; and the more he told, the more plainly he remembered all himself; and he thought: "That was a merry time! But it can come! it can come! Klumpy-Dumpy fell down stairs, and yet he got a princess! May be I can get a princess too!" And all of a sudden he thought of a nice little Birch-tree growing out in the woods: to the Pine, that would be a really charming princess.

"Who is Klumpy-Dumpy?" asked the little Mice. So then the Pine-tree told the whole fairy tale, for he could remember every single word of it; and the little Mice jumped for joy up to the very top of the Tree. Next night two more Mice came, and on Sunday two Rats, even; but they said the stories were not amusing, which vexed the little Mice, because they, too, now began to think them not so very amusing either.

"Do you know only that one story?" asked the Rats.

"Only that one!" answered the Tree. "I heard it on my happiest evening; but I did not then know how happy I was."

"It is a very stupid story! Don't you know one about bacon and tallow candles? Can't you tell any larder-stories?"

"No," said the Tree.

"Thank you, then," said the Rats, and they went home.

At last the little Mice stayed away also; and the Tree sighed: "After all, it was very pleasant when the sleek little Mice sat round me and heard what I told them. Now that too is over. But I will take good care to enjoy myself when I am brought out again."

But when was that to be? Why, it was one morning when there came a number of people

and set to work in the loft. The trunks were moved, the tree was pulled out and thrown down; they knocked him upon the floor, but a man drew him at once toward the stairs, where the daylight shone.

V.

OUT OF DOORS AGAIN.

"Now life begins again," thought the Tree. He felt the fresh air, the first sunbeam, — and now he was out in the courtyard. All passed so quickly that the Tree quite forgot to look to himself, there was so much going on around him. The court adjoined a garden, and all was in flower; the roses hung over the fence, so fresh and smelling so sweetly; the lindens were in blossom, the Swallows flew by, and said, "Quirre-virre-vit! my husband is come!" but it was not the Pine-tree that they meant.

"Now, I shall really live," said he with joy, and spread out his branches; dear! dear! they were all dry and yellow. It was in a corner among weeds and nettles that he lay. The golden star of tinsel was still on top of the Tree, and shone in the bright sunshine.

In the courtyard a few of the merry children were playing who had danced at Christmas

round the Tree, and were so glad at the sight of him. One of the littlest ran and tore off the golden star.

"See what is still on the ugly old Christmas tree!" said he, and he trampled on the branches, so that they cracked under his feet.

And the Tree saw all the beauty of the flowers, and the freshness in the garden; he saw himself, and he wished he had stayed in his dark corner in the attic: he thought of his fresh youth in the wood, of the merry Christmas Eve, and of the little Mice who had heard so gladly the story of Klumpy-Dumpy.

"Gone! gone!" said the poor Tree. "Had I but been happy when I could be. Gone! gone!"

And the gardener's boy came and chopped the Tree into small pieces; there was a whole heap lying there. The wood flamed up finely under the large brewing kettle, and it sighed so deeply! Each sigh was like a little shot. So the children ran to where it lay and sat down before the fire, and peeped in at the blaze, and shouted "Piff! paff!" But at every snap there was a deep sigh. The Tree was thinking of summer days in the wood, and of winter nights when the stars shone; it was thinking of Christmas Eve and Klumpy-Dumpy, the only fairy tale it had heard and knew how to tell, — and so the Tree burned out.

The boys played about in the court, and the youngest wore the gold star on his breast which the Tree had worn on the happiest evening of his life. Now, that was gone, the Tree was gone, and gone too was the story. All, all was gone, and that 's the way with all stories.

LUCK MAY LIE IN A STICK.

Now I am going to tell a story about Luck. All of us know Luck: some see her year in, year out, some only at certain times of the year, some only one single day; — yes, there are even people that only see Luck once in their life; but all of us do see her.

I suppose I need not tell you, for each of you knows it, that when our Lord sends a little child here, He lays it in a mother's lap: this may happen in a rich man's castle, or in a neat little room; but then it may happen instead in an open field, where the cold wind blows. But what not every one of you does know, and yet is really true, is that our Lord, when He places a child here, also sends along with it its good Luck, but the luck does not lie openly right by its side, but is hidden in some spot on our globe, where we look for it least; yet it is always found at last, and that is a comfort.

Luck once was placed in an apple; that was for a man whose name was Newton. The apple fell, and thus he found his Luck. If you do not know that story, ask some one to tell it to

you. I have another story to tell — a story about a pear.

There once lived a poor man, who was born poor, and had grown up poor, and was poor when he married. He was a turner by trade, and used to turn umbrella-handles and umbrella-rings, but he only earned enough money by this to live from hand to mouth.

"I shall never find *my* luck," said he.

Now this is a true story. I could name the country and the place where the man lived, but that is no matter. The red, sour mountain-ash trees grew around his house and in his garden, as if they were the choicest fruit; in the garden stood also a pear-tree, but it had never borne a pear, and yet there Luck was placed in an unseen pear.

One night, the wind blew terribly. Men said in the newspapers that the great stage-coach was lifted up from the side of the road, and thrown down like a lump of clay; so it was not at all strange that a big branch should have been broken from the pear-tree. The branch was taken into the workshop, and the man turned out of it, just for fun, a big pear, and another big pear, then a smaller pear, and then several very small pears.

"The tree shall bear pears once at least," he said, and gave them to the children to play with.

One of the things which we must have in a country where it rains is an umbrella. Now the whole family had only one for common use. When the wind blew very hard, the umbrella would turn over, and two or three times it broke; but the man quickly mended it again, — that was in his trade. With the button and string that kept the umbrella together, it went worse; it would always break too soon, just as one was folding the umbrella up.

One day, the button broke again, the man looked for it on the floor, and got hold of one of the smallest pears which he had turned, and had given to the children to play with.

"I can't find the button," said the man, "but this little thing will do." He bored a hole in it, pulled a small cord through it, and the little pear filled the place of the broken button nicely; it was just right, and the best thing to hold the umbrella together he had ever had.

Next year, when the man had to send umbrella handles and rings to town where he sold his goods, he sent also a few of the small wooden pears which he had turned, and asked to have them tried; and so they came to America. They soon found out there that the little pear held better than any other fastening; so they gave orders that all the umbrellas sent out should be fastened with a little wooden pear.

Ah, there was plenty to do now! Pears by the thousand! wooden pears on all umbrellas! and our man was kept busy at work. He turned and turned; the whole pear-tree was used for little wooden pears. It brought him coppers; it brought him dollars.

"In that pear-tree my Luck was placed," said the man. Now he had a great workshop, with girls and boys to help him. He was all the time in good humor, and often used to say, — "Luck may lie in a stick."

And that is what I say who tell the story; we have a proverb in Denmark, "Put a white stick in your mouth, and you will be invisible;" but it must be the right sort of a stick, — a true lucky-stick. I have had one of them; and whenever I come to America, the land of the New World, which is so far off, and yet so near me, I shall always carry that stick with me. I can send my greeting over in a few minutes; the ocean rolls over to its shores: there the wind blows; any day I can be there when my stories are read, and perhaps see the glittering gold receive the ringing gold, — the gold that is best of all, which shines in the eyes of children, and comes ringing from their lips, and the lips of their parents. I am in the very room with my friends, — and yet I am unseen. I have the white stick in my mouth.

Yes, Luck may lie in a stick.

THE TEA-POT.

THERE was a proud Tea-pot, proud of being porcelain, proud of its long spout, proud of its broad handle; it had something before and behind; the spout before, the handle behind, and that was what it talked about; but it did not talk of its lid — that was cracked, it was riveted, it had faults and one does not talk about one's faults, there are plenty of others to do that. The cups, the cream-pot, and sugar-bowl, the whole tea-service would be reminded much more of the lid's weakness and talk about that, than of the sound handle and the remarkable spout. The Tea-pot knew it.

"I know you," it said within itself, "I know, well enough too, my fault, and I am well aware that in that very thing is seen my humility, my modesty. We all have faults, but then one also has a talent. The cups get a handle, the sugar-bowl a lid, I get both, and one thing besides in front which they never got. I get a spout, and that makes me a queen on the tea-table. The sugar-bowl and cream-pot are good-looking serving maids, but I am the one who gives, yes, the

one high in council. I spread abroad a blessing among thirsty mankind. In my insides the Chinese leaves are worked up in the boiling, tasteless water."

All this said the Tea-pot in its fresh young life. It stood on the table that was spread for tea, it was lifted by a very delicate hand: but the very delicate hand was awkward, the Tea-pot fell, the spout snapped off, the handle snapped off, the lid was no worse to speak of — the worst had been spoken of that. The Tea-pot lay in a swoon on the floor, while the boiling water ran out of it. It was a horrid shame, but the worst was that they jeered at it; they jeered at it, and not at the awkward hand.

"I never shall lose the memory of that!" said the Tea-pot, when it afterward talked to itself of the course of its life. "I was called an invalid, and placed in a corner, and the day after was given away to a woman who begged victuals. I fell into poverty, and stood dumb both outside and in, but there, as I stood, began my better life. One is one thing and becomes quite another. Earth was placed in me: for a Tea-pot that is the same as being buried, but in the earth was placed a flower bulb. Who placed it there, who gave it, I know not; given it was, and it took the place of the Chinese leaves and the boiling water, the broken handle and spout.

And the bulb lay in the earth, the bulb lay in me, it became my heart, my living heart, such as I never before had. There was life in me, power and might: my pulses beat, the bulb put forth sprouts, it was the springing up of thoughts and feelings: they burst forth in flower. I saw it, I bore it, I forgot myself in its delight. Blessed is it to forget one's self in another. The bulb gave me no thanks, it did not think of me — it was admired and praised. I was so glad at that: how happy must it have been! One day I heard it said that it ought to have a better pot. I was thumped on my back — that was rather hard to bear; but the flower was put in a better pot — and I was thrown away in the yard where I lie as an old crock; but I have the memory: *that* I can never lose."

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

It was very, very cold; it snowed and it grew dark; it was the last evening of the year, New Year's Eve. In the cold and dark a poor little girl, with bare head and bare feet, was walking through the streets. When she left her own house she certainly had had slippers on; but what could they do? They were very big slippers, and her mother had used them till then, so big were they. The little maid lost them as she slipped across the road, where two carriages were rattling by terribly fast. One slipper was not to be found again, and a boy ran away with the other. He said he could use it for a cradle when he had children of his own.

So now the little girl went with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and a bundle of them in her hand. No one had bought anything of her all day; no one had given her a copper. Hungry and cold she went, and drew herself together, poor little thing! The snowflakes fell on her long yellow hair, which curled prettily over her neck; but

she did not think of that now. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a glorious smell of roast goose out there in the street, it was no doubt New Year's Eve. Yes, she thought of that!

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which was a little farther from the street than the other, she sat down and crept close. She had drawn up her little feet, but she was still colder, and she did not dare to go home for she had sold no matches, and she had not a single cent; her father would beat her and besides, it was cold at home, for they had nothing over them but a roof through which the wind whistled, though straw and rags stopped the largest holes.

Her small hands were quite numb with the cold. Ah! a little match might do her good if she only dared draw one from the bundle, and strike it against the wall, and warm her fingers at it. She drew one out. R-r-atch! how it spluttered and burned! It was a warm bright flame, like a little candle, when she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light! It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great polished stove, with bright brass feet and a brass cover. The fire burned so nicely; it warmed her so well — the little girl was just putting out her feet to warm these too, — when out went

the flame; the stove was gone; — she sat with only the end of the burned match in her hand.

She struck another; it burned; it gave a light; and where it shone on the wall, the wall became thin like a veil, and she could see through it into the room where a table stood, spread with a white cloth, and with china on it; and the roast goose smoked gloriously, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more splendid to behold, the goose hopped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast; straight to the little girl he came. Then the match went out, and only the thick, damp, cold wall was before her.

She lighted another. Then she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree; it was greater and finer than the one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of candles burned upon the green branches, and colored pictures like those in the shop windows looked down upon them. The little girl stretched forth both hands toward them; then the match went out. The Christmas lights went higher and higher. She saw that now they were stars in the sky: one of them fell and made a long line of fire.

"Now some one is dying," said the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had been good to her, but who was now dead,

had said: "When a star falls a soul mounts up to God."

She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the light there stood the old grandmother clear and shining, mild and lovely.

"Grandmother!" cried the child. "Oh, take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out. You will go away like the warm stove, the nice roast goose, and the great glorious Christmas tree!"

And she hastily rubbed the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a glow that it became brighter than in the middle of the day; grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl up in her arms, and both flew in the light and the joy so high so high! and up there was no cold, nor hunger, nor care — they were with God.

But in the corner by the house sat the little girl, with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year. The New Year's sun rose upon the little body, that sat there with the matches, of which one bundle was burned. She wanted to warm herself, the people said. No one knew what fine things she had seen, and in what glory she had gone in with her grandmother to the New Year's Day.

THE BEETLE.

I.

IN THE STABLE.

THE Emperor's horse was shod with gold; a golden shoe on each of its feet.

How did he come by golden shoes?

He was the most lovely creature, with thin legs, eyes as wise as a man's and a mane that hung down his neck like a silk veil. He had carried his master through the fire and smoke of battle, and heard the bullets whistling around him; he had kicked, bitten, and taken part in the fight when the enemy advanced; and had sprung, with his master on his back, over the fallen foe, and had saved the crown of red gold, and the life of the Emperor, which was more valuable than the red gold; and that is why the Emperor's horse had golden shoes, a golden shoe on each foot.

And the Beetle came creeping forth.

"First the great ones," said he, "and then the little ones; but greatness is not the only thing that does it." And so saying, he stretched out his thin legs.

"What do you want?" asked the Smith.

"Golden shoes," replied the Beetle.

"You must be out of your senses," cried the Smith. "Do you want to have golden shoes, too?"

"Golden shoes!" said the Beetle. "Am I not just as good as that big beast yonder, that is waited on, and brushed, and has meat and drink put before him? Don't I too belong to the Emperor's stable?"

"But *why* does the horse have golden shoes? Don't you understand that?" asked the Smith.

"Understand? I understand that it is a slight put upon me," cried the Beetle. "It is a shame, — and therefore I am going into the wide world."

"Go along!" said the Smith.

"You 're a rude fellow!" cried the Beetle: and then he went out of the stable, flew a little way, and soon afterward found himself in a beautiful garden, that smelled sweetly of roses and lilacs.

II.

OUT IN THE WORLD.

"Is it not beautiful here?" asked one of the little Lady-birds that flew about with black dots

on their wings that were like strong red shields. "How sweet it is here — how beautiful!"

"I'm used to better things," said the Beetle. "Do you call *this* beautiful? Why, there is not so much as a dung heap."

Then he went on, under the shadow of a great stack: a caterpillar was crawling along there.

"How beautiful the world is!" said the Caterpillar: "the sun is so warm, and all is so charming. And when I go to sleep, and die, as they call it, I shall wake up as a butterfly."

"You are making believe!" exclaimed the Beetle. "*You* fly about as a butterfly, indeed! I've come out of the stable of the Emperor, but no one there, not even the Emperor's favorite horse — that by the way wears my cast off golden shoes — has any such idea. Get wings! fly! why I can fly now;" and so the Beetle flew away. "I don't want to be vexed, and yet I am vexed," he said.

Soon afterward he fell down upon a great grass plat. For a while he lay there, and then he fell asleep.

Suddenly what a shower of rain came down! The Beetle woke up at the noise, and wanted to escape into the earth, but could not. He was tumbled over and over: sometimes he was swimming on his stomach, sometimes on his back,

and as for flying, that was not to be thought of; he was afraid he should never get off alive, so he just lay there.

When it lifted a little, and the Beetle had rubbed the water out of his eyes, he saw something gleaming. It was linen that had been placed there to bleach. He made his way up to it, and crept into a fold of the damp linen. Certainly the place was not so comfortable to lie in as the warm stable; but there was no better to be had, and so he lay there for a whole day and a whole night, and the rain kept on during all the time. Toward morning the Beetle crept forth: he was very much out of temper about the climate.

On the linen two frogs were sitting. Their bright eyes shone with pleasure.

"Wonderful weather this!" one of them cried. "How refreshing! And the linen keeps the water together so beautifully. My hind legs seem to quiver as if I were going to swim."

"I should like to know," said the second, "if the swallow, who flies so far round in her many journeys in foreign lands, has found a better climate than this. Such drizzle! such wet! It is really as if one were lying in a wet ditch. If one does not like this, then he does not love his fatherland."

"Have you ever been in the Emperor's sta-

ble?" asked the Beetle. "There the dampness is warm and refreshing. That's the climate for me; but I cannot take it with me on my journey. Is there never a muck-heap here in the garden, where a person of rank, like me, can go and feel himself at home?"

But the Frogs either did not or would not understand him.

"I never ask a question twice!" said the Beetle, after he had asked three times without getting any answer.

So he went on a bit, where lay a broken flower pot; it ought not to have been lying there; but as it was once there, it gave a shelter. Here lived several families of Earwigs; they did not want much house room; they only wanted to be close together. The females were all full of motherly pride, so each thought her child the prettiest and smartest.

"Our son is engaged," said one mother. "Dear, innocent boy! His greatest hope is that he may creep one day into a parson's ear. He is such a dear little fellow; and being engaged will keep him steady. What joy for a mother!"

"Our son," said another mother, "had scarcely crept out of the egg, when he was off on his travels. He's all life and spirits; he'll run his horns off! that is a huge joy for a mother! Is it not so, Mr. Beetle?" for she knew the stranger by his horny coat.

"You are both quite right," said he; so they begged him to walk in, — that is to say, to come as far as he could under the bit of pottery.

"Now you shall also see *my* little earwig," said a third mother and a fourth; "they are lovely little things, and so cunning. They are never ill-behaved, except when they have a stomach-ache; but one is very apt to have that at their age."

Thus each mother spoke of her baby; and the babies talked among themselves, and used the little nippers they have in their tails to nip the beard of the Beetle.

"Yes, they are always busy about something, the little rogues!" said the mothers; and they quite beamed with motherly pride; but the Beetle felt bored by it, and so he asked how far it was to the nearest muck-heap.

"That is quite out in the big world, on the other side of the ditch," said an Earwig; "so far that I hope none of my children will go there, for it would be the death of me."

"But *I* shall try to get so far," said the Beetle; and he went off without saying good-by; that 's a very polite way.

By the ditch he met several friends — beetles, all of them.

"Here we live," they said. "We are very well off here. Might we ask you to step down

into this rich mud? You must be tired after your journey."

"That I have been!" said the Beetle. "I have been upon linen in the rain, and cleanliness takes the life out of me. I have also a pain in one of my wings, from standing in a draught under a pit of pottery. It is really quite refreshing to be among my own people once more."

"Perhaps you come from a muck-heap?" said the oldest of them.

"Higher up," said the Beetle. "I come from the Emperor's stable, where I was born with golden shoes on my feet. I am traveling on a secret errand. You must not ask me what it is, for I can't tell you."

With this the Beetle stepped down into the rich mud. There sat three young maiden Beetles; and they tittered, because they did not know what to say.

"Not one of them is engaged yet," said their mother; and so they tittered again, this time because they were so confused.

"I have never seen prettier ones in the Emperor's stables," said the traveled Beetle.

"Don't spoil my girls," said the mother; "and don't talk to them, please, unless you mean what you say. But of course you are in earnest, and therefore I give you my blessing."

"Hurrah!" cried all the other Beetles; and our friend was engaged. First the engagement, then the wedding, for there was nothing to wait for.

The next day went off all right; the one after lagged, but on the third it was time to think of food for the wife, and perhaps for brats.

"I have let myself be taken in," said our Beetle. "And now there's nothing for it but to take *them* in, in turn."

So said, so done. Away he went; he was gone all day; he was gone all night; and his wife sat there a widow.

The other Beetles said that this fellow was a tramp whom they had taken into their family; and now his wife was on their hands.

III.

A PRISONER.

In the mean time, the Beetle was on his journey, and had sailed across the ditch on a cabbage-leaf. In the morning two persons came to the ditch. When they saw the Beetle, they took him up, and turned him over, and looked very learned, at least one of them did — a boy.

"Allah sees the black beetle in the black stone and in the black rock. Is not that written

in the Koran?" he asked, and then he translated the Beetle's name into Latin, and told all about his kind. The older scholar voted for carrying him home with them. They had some more just like him, he said; this was not very polite, the Beetle thought, and so he flew out of the speaker's hand. He flew quite a bit, as he now had dry wings, and so reached a hot-bed, where in the nicest way a sash of the glass roof was partly open; he quietly slipped in and buried himself in the warm earth.

"It is just right here," said he.

Soon after he fell asleep, and dreamed that the Emperor's horse had fallen, and that Mr. Beetle had got his golden shoes, with the promise of two more.

That was all very charming, and when the Beetle woke, he crept out and looked around him. How grand it was in the hot-house! Great palm-trees grew up to the roof; the sun made them transparent; and beneath them there was a mass of green, and flowers bloomed red as fire, yellow as amber, or white as fresh-fallen snow.

"There never was such a lot of plants," cried the Beetle. "How good they will taste when they begin to rot! A capital store-room this! Some of my family must be living here. I will just track about and see if I can find any one

with whom I may keep company. I'm proud, certainly, and I 'm proud of being proud."

And so he went about and thought of his dream about the dead horse, and the golden shoes that had come to him.

All at once a hand seized the Beetle, and pressed him, and turned him round and round.

The gardener's little son and a companion had come to the hot-house, had spied the Beetle, and wanted to have some fun with him. First, he was wrapped in a vine-leaf, and then put into warm trousers pocket. He cribbled and crabbled about there with all his might; but he got a good squeeze from the boy's hand, and then they went quickly toward the large pond that lay at the end of the garden. Here the Beetle was put in an old broken wooden shoe, a little stick was placed upright for a mast, and to this mast the Beetle was bound with a woolen thread. Now he was the captain and had to sail away.

It was a great big lake, so it seemed to the Beetle, a real ocean; and he was so astonished that he fell over on his back, and kicked out with his legs.

The wooden shoe sailed away. There was a current in the water, but whenever the vessel went too far out, one of the boys turned up his trousers and went in after it, and brought it back to the land. But when it was again in the

current, the boys were called for, and very loudly too; so off they went, and left the wooden shoe to be a wooden shoe. Thus it drove away from the shore, farther and farther into the open sea; it was awful for the Beetle; he could not fly away, for he was bound to the mast.

Then a Fly came and paid him a visit.

"What fine weather we are having!" said the Fly. "I'll rest here, and sun myself. You are having a good time."

"You talk as if you knew all about it," replied the Beetle. "Don't you see that I'm tied?"

"Ah! but I'm not tied," said the Fly; and so he flew away.

IV.

HOME AGAIN.

"Well, now I know the world," said the Beetle to himself. "It is a mean world. I'm the only honest man in it. First, they refuse me my golden shoes; then I have to lie on wet linen, and to stand in the draught; and at last beggar myself with a wife. If I take a quick step out into the world, and see how it is out there, and how I think it ought to be, one of these boys comes along and ties me up out on the wild sea.

And all the while the Emperor's horse goes about in golden shoes. That is what annoys me more than all. But one must not look for pity in this world! My career has been very interesting; but what 's the use of that, if nobody knows it? The world does not deserve to know it, or it would have given me golden shoes in the Emperor's stable, when the Emperor's horse stretched out his feet to be shod. If I had got golden shoes, I should have been an honor to the stable. Now, the stable has lost me, and the world has lost me. It is all over!"

But all was not yet over. A boat came along with some young girls in it.

"There is an old wooden shoe sailing along," said one of the girls.

"There 's a little creature tied fast on it," said another.

The boat came quite close to the wooden shoe, they picked it up, and one of the girls drew a small pair of scissors from her pocket, and cut the woolen thread without hurting the Beetle; and when she stepped on shore, she put him down on the grass.

"Creep, creep — fly, fly — if thou canst," she said. "Freedom is a fine thing."

And the Beetle flew straight in at the open window of a great building; there he sank down, tired out, on the fine, soft, long mane of

the Emperor's horse, who stood in the stable where he and the Beetle were. The Beetle clung fast to the mane, and sat there a little while and hummed to himself.

"Here I am sitting on the Emperor's horse, — sitting on him just like a rider. But what was I saying? Oh, now I remember. That 's a good idea and quite correct. Why did the horse have golden shoes? That is what he asked me, the Smith. Now I see very clearly. The horse got them for my sake."

And now the Beetle was in good temper again.

"One gets his head clear by travel," said he.

The sun shone in upon him, and shone brightly.

"The world is not so bad upon the whole," said the Beetle; "but one must know how to take it." The world was charming, because the Emperor's horse had golden shoes, since the Beetle was to be his rider.

"Now I 'll get down and see the other beetles and tell them how much has been done for me. I will tell all the haps I have had on my travels, and I will say that I shall stay at home as long as the horse keeps his gold shoes shiny."

THE DAISY.

Now you shall hear!

Out in the country, close by the road, there was a country-house: you certainly have seen it yourself, once at least. Before it is a little garden with flowers, and a fence which is painted. Close by it, by the ditch, in the midst of the most beautiful green grass, grew a little Daisy. The sun shone as warmly and as brightly upon it as on the great splendid show flowers in the garden, and so it grew from hour to hour. One morning it stood in full bloom, with its little shining white leaves that spread like rays round the little yellow sun in the centre. It never cared that no man would notice it down in the grass, and that it was a poor despised flower: no, it was very merry, and turned to the warm sun, looked up at it, and listened to the Lark that sang in the sky.

The little Daisy was as happy as if it were a great holiday, and yet it was only a Monday. All the children were at school; and while they sat on their benches and learned something, it sat on its little green stalk, and learned also from

the warm sun, and from all around, how good God is, and how it seemed as if the little Lark sang clearly and sweetly all that the Daisy felt in silence. And the Daisy looked up with a kind of respect to the happy bird who could sing and fly; but it was not at all sad because it could not fly and sing also.

"I can see and hear," it thought: "the sun shines on me, and the wind kisses me. Oh, how much I have had given me!"

Within the fence stood many stiff, proud flowers — the less scent they had the more they strutted. The peonies blew themselves out to be greater than the roses, but it is not size that will do that; the tulips had the most splendid colors, and they knew that, and held themselves bolt upright, that they might be seen more plainly. They did not notice the little Daisy outside there, but the Daisy looked at them the more, and thought: —

"How rich and beautiful they are! Yes, the pretty bird flies across to them and visits them. How glad I am that I stand so near them, for at any rate I can look at them!" And just as it thought that — "keevit!" — down came flying the Lark, but not down to the peonies and tulips — no, down into the grass to the lowly Daisy, which started so with joy that it did not know what to think.

The little bird danced round about it and sang: —

"Oh, how soft the grass is! and see what a sweet flower, with gold in its heart and silver on its dress!"

For the yellow point in the Daisy looked like gold, and the little leaves around it shone silvery white.

How happy was the little Daisy — no one can conceive how happy! The bird kissed it with his beak, sang to it, and then flew up again into the blue air. A quarter of an hour passed, at least, before the Daisy could come to itself again. Half ashamed, yet glad at heart, it looked at the other flowers in the garden, for they had seen the honor and happiness it had gained, and must know what joy it was. But the tulips stood up just as stiff as before, and they looked quite peaky in the face and quite red, for they had been vexed. The peonies were quite wrong-headed; bah! it was well they could not speak, or the Daisy would have got a good scolding. The poor little flower could see very well that they were not in a good humor, and that hurt its feelings. At this moment there came into the garden a girl with a great sharp, shining knife; she went straight up to the tulips, and cut off one after another of them.

"Oh!" sighed the little Daisy, "that was dreadful! Now it is all over with them."

Then the girl went away with the tulips. The Daisy was glad that it stood out in the grass, and was only a poor little flower; it felt very grateful; and when the sun went down it folded its leaves and went to sleep, and dreamed all night long of the sun and the little bird.

The next morning, when the flower again happily stretched out all its white leaves, like little arms, toward the air and the light, it heard the voice of the bird and knew it, but the song he sang was a sad one. Yes, the poor Lark had good reason to be sad: he was caught, and now sat in a cage close by the open window. He sang of free and happy roaming, sang of the young green corn in the fields, and of the glorious journey he might make on his wings high up in the air. The poor bird was not in good spirits, for there he sat shut up in a cage.

The little Daisy wished very much to help him. But what was it to do? Yes, that was hard to make out. It quite forgot how pretty everything about it was, how warm the sun shone, and how clear white its own leaves were. Ah! it could think only of the bird that was shut up, and how it was not able to do anything for him.

Just then two little boys came out of the garden. One of them had a knife in his hand; it was big and sharp like that which the girl had

used when she cut off the tulips. They went straight up to the little Daisy, which could not at all make out what they wanted.

"Here we may cut a capital piece of turf for the Lark," said one of the boys; and he began to cut off a square patch round about the Daisy, so that the flower remained standing in its piece of grass.

"Tear off the flower!" said the other boy; and the Daisy trembled with fear, for to be torn off would be to lose its life; and now it wanted so much to live since it was to be in the cage with the piece of turf for the captive Lark.

"No, let it stay," said the other boy; "it looks so nice." And so it was left, and was put into the cage with the Lark.

But the poor bird moaned aloud over his lost liberty, and beat his wings against the wires of his cage; the little Daisy could not speak — could say no word of comfort to him, gladly as it would have done so. And thus the whole morning passed.

"There is no water here," said the captive Lark. "They are all gone out, and have forgotten to give me anything to drink. My throat is dry and burning. It is like fire and ice within me, and the air is so close. Oh, I must die! I must leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green, and all the splendor that God has created!"

And then he thrust his beak into the cool turf to refresh himself a little with it. His eyes fell upon the Daisy and the bird nodded to it, and kissed it with his beak, and said, —

"You also must wither in here, poor little flower. They have given you to me with the little patch of green grass on which you grow, instead of the whole world which was mine out there! Every little blade of grass shall be a great tree for me, and every one of your white leaves a fragrant flower. Ah, you only tell me how much I have lost!"

"If I could only comfort him!" thought the Daisy, but it could not stir a leaf; but the scent which streamed forth from its thin leaves was far stronger than is often found in these flowers; the bird also noticed that, and though he was fainting with thirst, and in his pain plucked up the green blades of grass, he did not touch the flower.

Evening came on, and yet nobody came to bring the poor bird a drop of water. Then he stretched out his pretty wings and beat the air with them in a frenzy; his song was a sad peep! peep! his little head sank down toward the flower, and the bird's heart broke with want and longing. Then the flower could not fold its leaves and sleep as it had done the evening before; it hung sick and mourning, toward the earth.

Not till the next morning did the boys come; and when they found the bird dead they wept — wept many tears, — and dug him a neat grave, and made it pretty with leaves of flowers. The bird's body was put into a pretty red box, for he was to be royally buried — the poor bird! While he was alive and sang they forgot him, and let him sit in his cage and suffer want; now he lay in state and many tears were shed over him.

But the patch of turf with the Daisy on it was thrown out into the road: no one thought of the flower that had felt the most for the little bird, and wished so much to comfort him.

THE CONSTANT TIN SOLDIER.

THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers; they were all brothers, for they had all been born of one old tin spoon. They held guns, and looked straight before them; their uniform was red and blue, and very fine. The first thing they had heard in the world, when the lid was taken off the box, in which they lay, had been the words "Tin soldiers!" a little boy spoke up and clapped his hands. The soldiers had been given to him, for it was his birthday; and now he put them on the table. Each soldier was exactly like the rest; but one of them was a little different; he had one leg because he had been cast last of all, and there had not been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two; and it was just this soldier who became worth talking about.

On the table on which they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that most took the eye was a neat castle of cardboard. Through the little windows one could see straight into the hall. Outside stood some

small trees and a little looking-glass, which was made to look like a clear lake. Swans of wax swam on this lake, and looked at themselves in it. This was all very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she was cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf; and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose, as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then she lifted one foot so high in the air that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

"That would be the wife for me," thought he; "but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, and I have only a box, and there are five-and-twenty of us in that. It is no place for her. But I must try to make friends with her."

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table; there he could easily watch the little dainty lady, who still stood on one leg without losing her balance. When the evening came, all the tin soldiers were put in their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at "visiting," and at "war," and "giving balls." The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they

wanted to join, but could not lift the lid. The Nut-cracker went head over heels, and the Pencil played games on the table; there was so much noise that the Canary woke up, and began to speak too, and even in verse. The only two who did not stir from their places were the Tin Soldier and the little Dancer; she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms, and he was just as firm on his one leg; and he never turned his eyes away from her.

Now the clock struck twelve — and, bounce! the lid flew off the snuff-box; but there was not snuff in it, but a little black troll; you see, it was a Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin Soldier," said the Troll; "keep your eyes to yourself."

But the Tin Soldier made as if he did not hear him.

"Just you wait till to-morrow!" said the Troll.

But when the morning came, and the children got up, the Tin Soldier was placed in the window; and whether it was the Troll or the draught that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the Soldier fell, head over heels, out of the third story. That was a terrible journey! He put his leg straight up, and came down so that he stood on his head, and his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The servant-maid and the little boy came down at once to look for him, but though they almost trod upon him they could not see him. If the Soldier had cried out, "Here I am!" they would have found him; but he did not think it proper to call out loudly, because he was in his soldier clothes.

Now it began to rain; each drop fell faster than the other, and at last it came down in a full stream. When the rain was past, two street boys came by.

"Just look!" said one of them, "there lies a tin soldier. He shall have a sail."

And so they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it, and he sailed down the gutter; now the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Mercy on us! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran! But then it had been a heavy rain. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so quickly that the Tin Soldier trembled; but he was firm, and never moved a muscle, but looked straight before him, and carried his gun erect.

All at once the boat went into a long drain, and it became as dark as if he had been in his box.

"I wonder where I am going now," he thought. "Yes, yes, that 's the Troll's fault. Ah! if the

little lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for all I should care."

Suddenly there came a great water-rat, which lived under the drain.

"Have you a passport?" said the Rat. "Give me your passport."

But the Tin Soldier kept still, and only held faster his gun.

The boat went on, but the Rat came after it. Whew! how he gnashed his teeth, and called out to the bits of straw and wood, —

"Stop him! stop him! he has n't paid toll — he has n't shown his passport!"

But the stream became stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could see the bright daylight where the arch of the drain ended; but he also heard a roaring noise, which might well frighten a bolder man. Only think — just where the tunnel ended, the drain ran into a great canal; and for him that would have been as full of peril as for us to be carried down a great waterfall.

Now he was already so near it that he could not stop. The boat was carried out, the poor Tin Soldier held himself as stiffly as he could, and no one could say that he moved an eyelid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge — it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in

water, deeper and deeper sank the boat, and the paper was fast dropping to pieces; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little Dancer, and how he should never see her again; and it sounded in the Soldier's ears: —

"Farewell, farewell, thou warrior brave,
Die shalt thou this day."

And now the paper broke in two, and the Tin Soldier fell through; but at that moment he was swallowed up by a great fish.

Oh, how dark it was in there! It was darker than in the drain tunnel; and then it was very narrow, too. But the Tin Soldier was firm, and lay at full length, with his gun.

The fish swam to and fro; he made the strangest stir; at last he became quite still and there was a streak of light through him. The light shone quite clear, and a voice said aloud, "The Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She took the Soldier round the body with two fingers, and carried him into the room, where all waited to see the famous man who had traveled about in the inside of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there — no! What

curious things may happen in the world! The Tin Soldier was in the very room in which he had been before! he saw the same children, and the same toys stood upon the table; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful Dancer. She was still standing on one leg, and held the other extended in the air. She was faithful too. That moved the Tin Soldier: he was very near weeping tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her, and she looked at him, but they said nothing to each other.

Then one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier and flung him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing this. It must have been the fault of the Jack-in-the-box.

The Tin Soldier stood there quite in the blaze, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat came from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colors had quite run off from him; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he felt that he was melting; but he stood firm, with his gun in his arms. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the Dancer, and she flew like a sylph just into the stove to the Tin Soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and then was gone! Then the Tin Soldier melted down

into a lump, and when the servant-maid took the ashes out the next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the Dancer was left nothing but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

THERE was once a darning-needle, who thought herself so fine, she fancied she was a sewing needle.

"Take care, and mind you hold me tight!" she said to the Fingers that took her out. "Don't let me fall! If I fall on the floor I shall never be found again in the world, I am so fine!"

"That 's the way to talk!" said the Fingers; and they held her fast.

"See, I 'm coming with a train!" said the Darning-needle, and she drew a long thread after her, but there was no knot in the thread.

The Fingers pointed the needle straight at the cook's slipper, in which the upper leather had burst, and was to be sewn together.

"That 's vulgar work," said the Darning-needle. "I shall never get through. I 'm breaking! I 'm breaking!" And she really broke. "Did I not say so?" said the Darning-needle; "I 'm too fine!"

"Now it 's good for nothing," thought the Fingers; but they were obliged to hold her fast,

all the same; for the cook dropped some sealing-wax upon the needle, and stuck it in her necktie.

"So, now I'm a breastpin!" said the Darning-needle. "I knew very well that I should come to honor: when one is something, one always comes to something!"

And she laughed inside herself — for one can never see by the outside when a darning-needle laughs. There she sat, as proud as if she were in a state coach, and looked all about her.

"May I have the honor of asking if you are of gold?" she asked of the pin, her neighbor. "You have a very pretty look, and your own head, but it is little. You must see that you grow, for it's not every one that has wax dropped upon him."

And the Darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell out of the necktie right into the sink, which the cook was rinsing out.

"Now we're going on a journey," said the Darning-needle. "If I only don't get lost!"

But she really was lost.

"I'm too fine for this world," she observed, as she lay in the gutter. "But I know who I am, and there's always some comfort in that!"

So the Darning-needle held herself high, and did not lose her good humor. And all sorts of things swam over her, chips and straws and pieces of old newspapers.

"See, how they sail!" said the Darning-needle. "They don't know what is under them! I'm here, I remain firmly here. See, there goes a chip, thinking of nothing in the world but of himself — of a chip! There 's a straw going by now. How he turns! how he twirls about! Don't think only of yourself, you might easily run up against a paving-stone. There swims a bit of newspaper. What 's written upon it has long been forgotten, and yet it gives itself airs. I sit quietly and patiently here. I know who I am, and I shall remain what I am."

One day there was something that shone brightly close by her; so the Darning-needle thought that it was a diamond; but it was a bit of broken bottle; and because it shone, the Darning-needle spoke to it, saying that she was a breastpin.

"You are surely a diamond?"

"Why, yes, something of that kind."

And so each thought the other to be a very costly thing; and they began saying how proud the world was.

"I have been in a lady's box," said the Darning-needle, "and this lady was a cook. She had five fingers on each hand, and I never saw anything so vain as those five fingers. And yet they were only there that they might take me out of the box and put me back into it."

"Did they have lustre?" asked the Bit of Bottle.

"Lustre!" said the Darning-needle, "no; nothing but pride. There were five brothers, all of the finger family. They held their heads high with each other, though they were not of the same length: the outside one, Thumbling, was short and fat; he walked out in front of the ranks, and only had one joint in his back, and could make only a single bow; but he said that if he were hacked off a man, the whole man was spoiled for war. Lick-pot was in sweet and sour, pointed to sun and moon, and it was he who bore hard when they wrote. Longman, the third, looked over the heads of all the others. Ring finger had a gold ring round his waist; and little Peter Playman did nothing at all, and was proud of it. It was brag, brag all the time; and so I fell into the sink."

"And now we sit here and glitter!" said the Bit of Bottle.

At that moment more water came into the gutter, so that it flowed over the edge and carried off the Bit of Bottle.

"So he goes up higher," said the Darning-needle. "I remain here, I am too fine. But that's my pride, and my pride is worthy." And so she sat there with her head high, and had many great thoughts. "I could almost believe

I had been born of a sunbeam, I 'm so fine! Does n't it seem too as if the sun were always seeking for me under the water? Ah! I 'm so fine that my mother cannot find me. If I had my old eye, which I broke off, I think I should cry; but, no, I should not do that: it 's not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of street boys lay grubbing in the gutter, where they found old nails, cents, and such like things. It was dirty work, but they liked it.

"Oh!" cried one, who had pricked himself with the Darning-needle, "there 's a fellow for you!"

"I 'm not a fellow; I 'm a young lady!" said the Darning-needle.

But nobody heard her. The sealing-wax had come off, and she had turned black; but black makes one look slender, and so she thought herself finer even than before.

"Here comes an egg-shell sailing along!" said the boys; and they stuck the Darning-needle fast in the egg-shell.

"White walls, and black myself! that looks well," remarked the Darning-needle. "Now one can see me. I only hope I shall not be seasick, for then I may split in two!" But she was not seasick at all, and did not crack. "It is good, if one is seasick, to have a steel stomach,

and not to forget that one is a little more than mankind! Now my seasickness is over. The finer one is, the more one can bear."

"Crack!" went the egg-shell, for a wagon went over it.

"Dear me! how it crushes one!" said the Darning-needle. "I 'm getting seasick now,— I 'm quite sick, I am going to break!" but she did not break, though the wagon went over her! she lay there at full length, and there she may lie.

THE LOVERS.

THE Top and the Ball lay in a drawer among some other toys; and so the Top said to the Ball, —

"Shall we not be lovers, since we live together in the same drawer?"

But the Ball, which had a coat of morocco leather, and thought herself as good as any fine lady, had nothing to say to such a thing. The next day came the little boy who owned the toys: he painted the Top red and yellow, and drove a brass nail into it; and the Top looked splendidly when he turned round.

"Look at me!" he cried to the Ball. "What do you say now? Shall we not be lovers? We go so nicely together! You jump and I dance! No one could be happier than we two should be."

"Indeed! Do you think so?" said the Ball. "Perhaps you do not know that my papa and my mamma were morocco slippers, and that I have a cork inside me?"

"Yes, but I am made of mahogany," said the Top; "and the mayor himself turned me.

He has a turning-lathe of his own, and it amuses him greatly."

"Can I depend on that?" asked the Ball.

"May I never be whipped again if it is not true!" replied the Top.

"You talk well for yourself," said the Ball, "but I cannot do what you ask. I am as good as half engaged to a swallow: every time I leap up into the air he sticks his head out of the nest and says, 'Will you? will you?' And now I have silently said 'Yes,' and that is as good as being half engaged; but I promise I will never forget you."

"Much good that will do!" said the Top.

And they spoke no more to each other.

Next day the Ball was taken out. The Top saw how she flew high into the air, like a bird; at last one could no longer see her. Each time she came back again, but always gave a high leap when she touched the earth; and that came about either from her longing, or because she had a cork in her body. The ninth time the Ball stayed away and did not come back again; and the boy looked and looked, but she was gone.

"I know very well where she is!" sighed the Top. "She is in the Swallow's nest, and has married the Swallow!"

The more the Top thought of this, the more

he longed for the Ball. Just because he could not get her, he fell more in love with her. That she had taken some one else, that was another thing. So the Top danced round and hummed, but always thought of the Ball, which grew more and more lovely in his fancy. Thus many years went by, — and now it was an old love.

And the Top was no longer young! But one day he was gilt all over; never had he looked so handsome; he was now a golden Top, and sprang till he hummed again. Yes, that was something! But all at once he sprang too high, and — he was gone!

They looked and looked, even in the cellar, but he was not to be found.

Where was he?

He had jumped into the dust-box, where all kinds of things were lying: cabbage stalks, sweepings, and gravel that had fallen down from the roof.

"Here 's a nice place to lie in! The gilding will soon leave me here. And what a rabble I 've come amongst!"

And then he looked askance at a long cabbage stalk that was much too near him, and at a curious round thing like an old apple; but it was not an apple — it was an old Ball, which had lain for years in the roof-gutter and was soaked through with water.

"Thank goodness, here comes one of us, with whom one can talk!" said the little Ball, and looked at the gilt Top. "I am really morocco, sewn by a girl's hands, and have a cork inside me; but no one would think it, to look at me. I was very near marrying a swallow, but I fell into the gutter on the roof, and have laid there full five years, and am quite wet through. That's a long time, you may believe me, for a young girl."

But the Top said nothing. He thought of his old love; and the more he heard, the clearer it became to him that this was she. Then came the servant-girl, and wanted to empty the dust-box. "Aha, there's a gilt top!" she cried. And so the Top was brought again to notice and honor, but nothing was heard of the Ball. And the Top spoke no more of his old love; for that dies away when the beloved has lain for five years in a roof-gutter and got wet through; yes, one does not know her again when one meets her in the dust-box.

THE SNOW-QUEEN.

FIRST STORY.

Which tells of a Mirror and its Splinters.

Look here! now we begin. When we are at the end of the story, we shall know more than we know now.

There was a wicked sprite, — one of the very worst of all sprites. One day he was in a very good humor; he had made a mirror which had the power that every good and lovely thing which looked in it wasted away to just nothing at all; but that which was of no use and was ugly came right to the front and grew still worse. The most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and the best persons were turned into frights, or appeared to stand on their heads; their faces were so twisted that they were not to be made out; and if any one had a mole, you might be sure that it would spread over both nose and mouth.

"That 's glorious fun!" said the Sprite. If a good thought passed through a man's mind,

then a grin was seen in the mirror, and the Sprite laughed to think how cleverly he had made the mirror. All the little sprites who went to his school — for he kept a sprite school — told one another that a miracle had happened; and that now only, as they thought, one could see how the world really looked. They ran about with the mirror; and at last there was not a land or a person that had not been seen in it.

So then they thought they would fly up to the sky, and have a joke there. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more it grinned; they could hardly hold it fast. Higher and higher still they flew, nearer and nearer to the stars; then suddenly the mirror shook so terribly with grinning, that it flew out of their hands and fell to the earth, where it was dashed into a hundred million, yes a billion and more pieces.

And now it worked much more evil than before; for some of these pieces were hardly so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about in the wide world; and when they got into people's eyes, there they stayed; and then people saw everything crooked, or only had an eye for that which was evil. For the very smallest bit had the same power which the whole mirror had. Some persons even got splinters in their hearts, and then it made one shudder, for their hearts became like lumps of ice.

Some of the broken pieces were so large that they were used for panes of glass, but through these panes it was not well to look at one's friends. Other pieces were put in spectacles; and it turned out very ill when people put on their glasses to see well and rightly. Then the wicked Sprite laughed till he almost choked, for all this tickled his fancy. The fine splinters still flew about in the air: and now we shall hear what happened next.

SECOND STORY.

A Little Boy and a Little Girl.

In a large town, where there are so many houses, and so many people, that there is not room enough for everybody to have a little garden; and where, on this account, most persons must be content with flowers in pots, there lived two poor children, who had a garden a little larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister; but they cared for each other as much as if they were. Their parents lived side by side. They lived in two garrets; and where the roof of the one house joined that of the other, and the gutter ran along the eaves, there was to each house a small window: one needed only to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

The children's parents had large wooden boxes there, and in them grew beans and peas, which they raised, and little rosebushes besides: there was a rose in each box, and these grew splendidly. They now thought of placing the boxes across the gutter, so that they nearly reached from one window to the other, and looked just like two walls of flowers. The tendrils of the peas hung down over the boxes, and the rosebushes sent out long branches, twined around the windows, and then bent towards each other: it was almost like a triumphal arch of vines and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they must not creep over them; but they often got leave to get out of the windows to each other, and to sit on their little stools under the roses, where they could play nicely.

In winter there was an end of this pleasure. The windows were often frozen over; but then each heated a copper on the stove, and laid the hot piece on the window-pane, and then they had capital peep-holes, quite nicely rounded; and out of each peeped a gentle, friendly eye — it was the little boy and the little girl who were looking out. His name was Kay, hers was Gerda. In summer, with one jump, they could get to each other; but in winter they must first go down the long stairs, and then up the long stairs again: and out-of-doors it was snowing.

"It is the white bees that are swarming," said Kay's old grandmother.

"Have they, also, a queen?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the honey-bees always have one.

"That have they," said the grandmother; "she flies where they swarm thickest. She is the largest of them all; and she never remains quietly on the earth, but flies up again into the black sky. Many a winter night she flies through the streets of the town, and peeps in at the windows; and they then freeze in so wondrous a manner that they look as if they bore flowers."

"Yes, I have seen it," said both the children; and so they knew it was true.

"Can the Snow-Queen come in?" asked the little girl.

"Only let her come in!" said the little boy; "then I'd put her on the warm stove, and she'd melt."

And then his grandmother patted his head, and told him other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home, and half undressed, he climbed up on the stool by the window, and peeped out of the little hole. A few snowflakes were falling, and one, the largest of all, remained lying on the edge of a flower-pot. The flake of snow grew larger and

larger; and at last it was like a young lady, dressed in the finest white gauze, made of a million little flakes, like stars. She was most beautiful and delicate, but she was of ice, of dazzling, sparkling ice; yet she lived; her eyes stared, like two bright stars, but there was no rest or peace in them. She nodded toward the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair — when something like a large bird flew past the window.

The next day there was a sharp frost; then there was a thaw, and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green leaves peeped out, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their pretty garden, high up on the roof above all the stories.

That summer the roses bloomed finely. The little girl had learned a hymn, and in it there was a word about roses; and with the roses in the hymn she thought of her own; and she sang the verse to the little boy, and he sang it with her: —

> "The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
> The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

And the children held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, looked up at the clear sunshine, and spoke as if they really saw Jesus there.

What lovely summer days those were! How delightful to be out in the air, near the fresh rosebushes, that seemed as if they would always keep on bearing flowers.

Kay and Gerda sat and looked at a picture-book full of beasts and of birds; and it was then — the clock in the church-tower was just striking five — that Kay said, "Oh! I feel such a sharp pain in my heart; and now something has got into my eye!"

The little girl put her arms round his neck. He winked his eyes; no, there was nothing to be seen.

"I think it is out now," said he; but it was not out. It was just one of those pieces of glass from the mirror, the Sprite's mirror we know about, the wicked glass, that makes everything great and good, which looks into it, become small and ugly: but the evil and base comes forward, and every fault is sure to be seen. Poor Kay, he had also got a piece right in his heart. It would soon become like a lump of ice. It did not hurt any longer, but there it was.

"What are you crying for?" asked he. "You look so ugly! There's nothing the matter with me. Ah," said he at once, "that rose is eaten by a worm! and, look, this one is quite crooked! after all, these roses are very ugly! they are just like the box they are planted in!"

And then he gave the box a good kick with his foot, and pulled both the roses up.

"Kay! what are you doing?" cried the little girl; and when he saw her fright, he pulled up another rose, got in at the window, and hastened off from dear little Gerda.

When she came with her picture-book, he said it was only for babies! and if his grandmother told him stories, he always came out with a "But!" Yes, he even came to this, that he got behind her back, put on her glasses, and talked like her. He did it so closely that everybody laughed at him.

He was soon able to talk and walk like every one in the street. If there was anything odd or secret about them — that Kay knew how to copy; and so people said, "What a great head that boy has!" But it was the glass he had got in his eye; the glass that was sticking in his heart, which made him tease even little Gerda, who held by him with her whole soul.

His games now were quite other than what they had been, they were so very knowing. One winter day, when the flakes of snow were flying about, he came with a big burning-glass, and spread the skirts of his blue coat, and let the flakes fall on it.

"Look through this glass, Gerda," said he. And every flake seemed larger, and looked like

a fine flower, or a star with points: it was splendid to look at!

"Look, how clever!" said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers! They are as exact as possible; there is not a fault in them, if they did not melt!"

It was not long after this that Kay came one day with large gloves on, and his little sled at his back, and bawled right into Gerda's ears, "I have leave to go out into the square, where the others are playing;" and off he went.

There, in the square, some of the boldest of the boys used to tie their sleds to the carts as they passed by, and so were pulled along, and got a good ride. It was fine! Just as they were in the thick of the fun, a large sledge passed by; it was painted quite white, and there was some one in it wrapped up in a rough white mantle of fur, with a rough white fur cap.

The sledge drove round the square twice, and Kay tied on his little sled as quickly as he could, and off he drove with it. On they went quicker and quicker into the next street; and the person who drove turned, and nodded to Kay in a friendly manner, just as if they knew each other. Every time Kay was going to untie his sled the person nodded again, and then Kay sat quiet; they drove straight out of the gate of the town.

Then the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his hand before his face, but still on he went; when suddenly he let go the string in order to get loose from the sledge, but it was of no use; his little sled held fast and sped on like the wind. Then he cried as loud as he could, but no one heard him; the snow drifted and the sledge flew on; now and then it gave a jerk as if they were driving over hedges and ditches. He was quite frightened, and he tried to repeat the Lord's Prayer; but he could only remember the multiplication table.

The snowflakes grew larger and larger, till at last they looked just like great white fowls. All at once they flew on one side; the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove rose up; the cloak and cap were of snow. It was a lady, tall and slender, and shining white. It was the Snow-Queen.

"We have traveled fast," said she; "but it will freeze. Creep under my bearskin." And she put him in the sledge beside her, wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as though he were sinking in a snowdrift.

"Are you freezing yet?" asked she; and then she kissed his forehead. Ugh! it was colder than ice; it went to his very heart, which was already half a lump of ice; it seemed to him as if he were about to die, — but only for a moment,

then he liked it, and he did not any more notice the cold that was around him.

"My sled! Do not forget my sled!" It was the first thing he thought of. It was there, tied to one of the white chickens, who flew along with it on his back behind the large sledge. The Snow-Queen kissed Kay once more, and then he forgot little Gerda, grandmother, and all he had left at home.

"Now you shall have no more kisses," said she, "or else I should kiss you to death!"

Kay looked at her. She was very beautiful; a face more full of wit and beauty he could not fancy to himself; and she no longer seemed of ice as before, when she sat outside the window, and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect; he did not fear her at all, and told her that he could do sums in his head, and with fractions even; that he knew the number of square miles there were in the different countries, and how many inhabitants they contained; and she smiled all the time.

Then it seemed to him as if what he knew was not enough, and he looked up into the great, great space above him, and on she flew with him; flew high up into the dark sky, and the storm moaned and whistled as though it were singing some old tune. On they flew over wood and lake, over sea and land; beneath them

the cold blast whistled, the wolves howled, the snow crackled; above them flew large screaming crows, but overhead shone the moon, large and bright; and on it Kay gazed during the long, long winter's night; by day he slept at the feet of the Snow-Queen.

THIRD STORY.

Of the Flower-Garden at the Old Woman's who understood Witchcraft.

But what became of little Gerda when Kay did not return? Where could he be? Nobody knew; nobody could give any news of him. The boys could only tell that they had seen him tie his little sled to another large and splendid one, which drove down the street and out of the town gate. Nobody knew where he was; many sad tears were shed, and little Gerda wept long and bitterly; at last she said he must be dead; that he had been drowned in the river which flowed close to the town. Oh, those were very long and dark winter days!

Then spring came with its warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"That I don't believe," said the Sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said she to the Swallows.

"That we don't believe," said they; and at last little Gerda did not think so any longer either.

"I 'll put on my new red shoes," said she, one morning; "Kay has never seen them, and then I 'll go down to the river and ask there."

It was quite early: she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the gate to the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow? I will make you a present of my red shoes, if you will give him back to me."

And the waves, it seemed to her, nodded in a strange manner; then she took off her red shoes, the dearest things she had, and threw them both into the river. But they fell close to the bank, and the little waves bore them straight to land to her; it was as if the stream would not take what was dearest to her when it had not got little Kay: but Gerda thought that she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she climbed into a boat which lay among the rushes, went to the farthest end, and threw out the shoes. But the boat was not tied fast, and with the motion she made, it drifted from the shore. She saw this, and tried to get back; but before she could do so, the boat was more than a yard away, and was gliding quickly onward.

Little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry: but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; but they flew along the bank, and sang as if to comfort her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drifted with the stream; little Gerda sat quite still with bare feet; her little red shoes were swimming behind the boat, but they could not reach it, because it went much faster than they did.

It was fair to see on both banks; there were lovely flowers, old trees, and slopes with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda; and then she grew less sad. She rose, and looked for many hours at the beautiful green banks. So she came to a large cherry-orchard, where was a little house with curious red and blue windows, and a thatched roof besides, and before the house two wooden soldiers, who shouldered arms when any one went past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive; but they, of course, did not answer. She came close to them, for the stream drove the boat quite near the land.

Gerda called still louder, and an old dame then came out of the old house, leaning upon a crooked stick. She had a large sunbonnet on, and it was painted with the most splendid flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old dame, "how did you get upon the large swift river, to be driven about so in the wide world!" And then the old dame went into the water, stuck her crooked stick fast in the boat, drew it to the bank, and lifted little Gerda out.

And Gerda was glad to be on dry land again; but still she was rather afraid of the strange old dame.

"Come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," said she.

And Gerda told her all; and the old dame shook her head and said, "A-hem! a-hem!" and when Gerda had told her everything, and asked her if she had not seen little Kay, the dame answered that he had not passed there, but he no doubt would come; and she told her not to be cast down, but taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were finer than any in a picture-book; they could each tell a whole story. So she took Gerda by the hand, they went into the little house, and the old dame locked the door.

The windows were very high up; the glass was red, blue, and green, and the sunlight shone through quite finely in all sorts of colors. On the table stood the nicest cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she chose, for she had leave. And while she was eating, the old dame combed

her hair with a golden comb, and the hair curled and shone with a lovely golden color around that sweet little face, which was round and like a rose.

"I have often longed for just such a dear little girl," said the old dame. "Now you shall see how well we agree together;" and while she combed little Gerda's hair, Gerda forgot her foster-brother Kay more and more, for the old dame knew magic; but she was no evil being; she only used magic a little for her own pleasure, and now she wanted very much to keep little Gerda. She therefore went out into the garden, stretched out her crooked stick towards the rosebushes, and though they were all in flower, they sank into the earth, and no one could tell where they had stood. The old dame was afraid that if Gerda should see the roses, she would think of her own, would remember little Kay, and so run away from her.

She now led Gerda into the flower-garden. Oh, what odor and what loveliness were there! Every flower that one could think of, and of every season, stood there in fullest bloom; no picture-book could be gayer or more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun set behind the tall cherry-trees: she then had a pretty bed, with a red silken spread that was stuffed with blue violets. She fell asleep, and

had as pleasant dreams as ever a queen on her wedding-day.

The next morning she went to play again with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and thus passed away a day. Gerda knew every flower; but, many as they were, it still seemed to her that one was wanting, though she did not know which. She sat one day, and looked at the old dame's sunbonnet with its painted flowers, and the very prettiest of them all was a rose. The old dame had forgotten to take it from her hat when she sent the others down into the earth. But so it is not to have one's wits about one.

"What!" said Gerda; "are there no roses here?" and she ran about amongst the flower-beds, and looked, and looked, but there was not one to be found. Then she sat down and wept; but her hot tears fell just where a rosebush had sunk; and when her warm tears watered the ground, the tree shot up at once as fresh as when it sank, and Gerda hugged it, kissed the roses, and thought of her own dear roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

"Oh, how long I have stayed!" said the little girl. "I came to look for Kay! Don't you know where he is?" she asked of the Roses. "Do you think he is dead and gone?"

"Dead he is not," said the Roses. "We have been in the earth where all the dead are, but Kay was not there."

"Thank you!" said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Don't you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun, and dreamed its own fairy-tale or its own story; and they all told Gerda many, many things, but not one knew anything of Kay.

And what does the Tiger-Lily say?

"Do you hear the drum? Bum! bum! those are the only two tones. Always bum! bum! Hark to the song of sorrow of the old woman! to the call of the priests! The Hindoo woman in her long robe stands upon the funeral pile; the flames rise around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo woman thinks on the living one in the circle; on him whose eyes burn hotter than the flames — on him, the fire of whose eyes pierces her heart more than the flames which soon will burn her body to ashes. Can the heart's flame die in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," said the Tiger-Lily.

What does the Morning-Glory say?

"Over a narrow mountain-path hangs an old castle. Thick ivy grows on the old, falling walls, leaf by leaf even up to the altar, and there

stands a lovely maiden; she leans over the railing and looks out upon the path. No fresher rose hangs on the branches than she; no apple-blossom carried away by the wind sways more than she. How her splendid silken robe is rustling! 'Is he not yet come?'"

"Is it Kay that you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I am speaking about my story — about my dream," answered the Morning-Glory.

What do the Snowdrops say?

"Between the trees a long board is hanging on a cord, — it is a swing. Two nice little girls sit and swing: their frocks are white as snow, long green silk ribbons flutter from their bonnets. Their brother, who is bigger than they are, stands up in the swing; he twines his arms round the cords to hold himself fast, for in one hand he has a little cup, and in the other a clay pipe. He is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves, and the bubbles float in charming, changing colors; the last is still hanging to the end of the pipe, and rocks in the breeze. The swing moves. The little black dog, as light as a soap-bubble, jumps up on his hind legs and wants to get into the swing. It moves, the dog falls down, barks, and is angry. They tease him; the bubble bursts! A swinging board — a bursting bubble — such is my song!"

"It may be pretty, what you tell about, but you tell it sadly, and you do not speak of Kay."

What do the Hyacinths say?

"There were three sisters, who were very pretty, and you could see through them. The robe of the one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third white. They danced hand in hand, beside the calm lake in the clear moonshine. They were not elfin maidens, but mortal children. A sweet odor was smelt, and the maidens vanished in the wood; the odor grew stronger — three coffins, and in them, the three lovely maidens, passed out of the forest and across the lake: the shining glow-worms flew around like little floating lights. Do the dancing maidens sleep, or are they dead? The odor of the flowers says they are corpses; the evening bell tolls for the dead!"

"You make me quite sad," said little Gerda. "Your odor is so strong. I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Oh! is little Kay really dead? The Roses have been in the earth, and they say no."

"Ding, dong!" sounded the Hyacinth bells. "We do not toll for little Kay: we do not know him. That is our way of singing, the only one we know."

And Gerda went to the Buttercups, that looked forth from among the shining green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun!" said Gerda. "Tell me, if you know, where I can find my playfellow."

And the Buttercups shone brightly, and looked again at Gerda. What song could the Buttercup sing? That one was not one about Kay either.

"In a small yard the bright sun was shining warmly in the first days of spring. The beams glided down the white walls of a neighbor's house, and close by were growing the fresh yellow flowers shining like gold in the warm sun-rays. An old grandmother was sitting in the air; her granddaughter, the poor and pretty servant, came home from a short visit. She kissed her grandmother. There was gold, the gold of the heart, in that blessed kiss. There, that is my little story," said the Buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she is longing for me, no doubt; she is weeping for me, as she did for little Kay. But I shall soon come home, and bring Kay with me. It is of no use asking the flowers; they only know their own rhymes; they tell me no news."

And she tucked up her frock, so that she could run quicker; but the Lily gave her a knock on the leg, just as she was going to jump over it. So she stood still, looked at the long, yellow flower, and asked, "You perhaps know some-

thing?" and she bent down to the Lily. And what did it say?

"I can see myself — I can see myself!" said the Lily. "Oh, oh, how I smell! Up in the little garret there stands half-dressed a little Dancer. She stands now on one leg, now on both; she kicks at the whole world; she is quite dazzling. She pours water out of the teapot over a piece of stuff which she holds in her hand; it is the bodice: cleanliness is a fine thing. The white dress is hanging on the hook; it was washed in the tea-pot, and dried on the roof. She puts it on, ties a saffron-colored kerchief round her neck, and then the gown looks whiter. See how proudly she stands! I can see myself — I can see myself!"

"That 's nothing to me," said little Gerda. "That does not concern me." And then off she ran to the further end of the garden.

The gate was locked, but she shook the rusted bolt till it was loose, and the gate sprang open; and little Gerda ran off on her bare feet out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one came after her.

At last she could run no longer; she sat down on a large stone, and when she looked about her, she saw that the summer had passed; it was late in the autumn; one could not see that in the beautiful garden, where there was

always sunshine, and where there were flowers the whole year round.

"Dear me, how long I have stayed!" said Gerda. "Autumn is come. I must not rest any longer." And she got up to go further.

Oh, how tender and wearied her little feet were! All around it looked cold and raw; the long willow-leaves were quite yellow, and the fog dripped from them into the water; one leaf fell after the other: the sloes only stood full of fruit which set one's teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and dull it was in the dreary world!

FOURTH STORY.

The Prince and Princess.

Gerda was obliged to rest herself again, when just over against where she sat, a large crow hopped over the white snow. He had sat there a long while, looking at her and shaking his head; and now he said, "Caw! caw! Good day! good day!" He could not say it better; but he meant well by the little girl, and asked her where she was going all alone out in the wide world. The word "alone" Gerda understood quite well, and felt how much lay in it; so she told the Crow her whole history, and asked if he had not seen Kay.

The Crow nodded very gravely, and said, "It may be — it may be!"

"What! do you really think so?" cried the little girl; and she nearly squeezed the Crow to death, so much did she kiss him.

"Gently, gently," said the Crow. "I think I know; I think that it may be little Kay. But now he has quite forgotten you for the Princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes, — listen," said the Crow; "but it is hard for me to speak your language. If you understand the Crow language, I can tell you better."

"No, I have not learnt it," said Gerda; "but my grandmother understands it. I wish I had learnt it."

"No matter," said the Crow; "I will tell you as well as I can; but it will be bad enough." And then he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom where we now are, there lives a princess, who is vastly clever; for she has read all the newspapers in the whole world, and has forgotten them again, — so clever is she. Some time ago, they say, she was sitting on her throne, — which is no great fun, after all, — when she began humming an old tune, and it was just 'Oh, why should I not be married?' 'Come, now, there is something in

that,' said she, and so then she was bound to marry; but she would have a husband who knew how to give an answer when he was spoken to, — not one who was good for nothing but to stand and be looked at, for that is very tiresome. She then had all the ladies of the court drummed together; and when they heard what she meant to do, all were well pleased, and said, 'We are quite glad to hear it; it is the very thing we were thinking of.' You may believe every word I say," said the Crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart that hops about in the palace quite freely, and she told me all.

"The newspapers at once came out with a border of hearts and the initials of the Princess; and you could read in them that every good-looking young man was free to come to the palace and speak to the Princess; and he who spoke in such wise as showed he felt himself at home there, and talked best, that one the Princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes — yes," said the Crow, "you may believe it; it is as true as I am sitting here. People came in crowds; there was a crush and a hurry, but no one had good luck either on the first or second day. They could all talk well enough when they were out in the street; but as soon as they came inside the palace-gates, and saw the guard richly dressed in silver, and

the lackeys in gold, on the staircase, and the large lighted halls, then they were dumb; and when they stood before the throne on which the Princess was sitting, all they could do was to repeat the last word she had said, and she did n't care to hear that again. It was just as if the people within were under a charm, and had fallen into a trance till they came out again into the street; for then, — oh, then they could chatter enough. There was a whole row of them from the town-gates to the palace. I was there myself to look on," said the Crow. "They grew hungry and thirsty: but from the palace they got not so much as a glass of water. Some of the cleverest, it is true, had taken bread and butter with them; but none shared it with his neighbor, for each thought, 'Let him look hungry, and then the Princess won't have him.'"

"But Kay — little Kay," asked Gerda, "when did he come? Was he among the number?"

"Give me time! give me time! we are coming to him. It was on the third day, when a little personage, without horse or carriage, came marching right boldly up to the palace; his eyes shone like yours, he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very shabby."

"That was Kay," cried Gerda, with a voice of delight. "Oh, now I've found him!" and she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack at his back," said the Crow.

"No, that was certainly his sled," said Gerda; "for he went away with his sled."

"That may be," said the Crow; "I did not see him close to; but I know from my tame sweetheart that when he came into the court-yard of the palace, and saw the body-guard in silver, and the lackeys on the staircase in gold, he was not in the least cast down; he nodded, and said to them, 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs; for my part, I shall go in.' The halls were bright with lights. Court-people and fine folks were walking about on bare feet; it was all very solemn. His boots creaked, too, very loudly; but still he was not at all afraid."

"That 's Kay, for certain," said Gerda. "I know he had on new boots; I have heard them creaking in grandmamma's room."

"Yes, they creaked," said the Crow. "And on he went boldly up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel. All the ladies of the court stood about, with their maids and their maids' maids, and all the gentlemen with their servants and their servants' servants, who kept a boy; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The boy of the servants' servants, who always goes in slippers, hardly looked at one, so very proudly did he stand in the doorway."

"It must have been terrible," said little Gerda. "And did Kay get the Princess?"

"Were I not a Crow, I should have taken the Princess myself, although I am engaged. It is said he spoke as well as I speak when I talk crow language; this I learned from my tame sweetheart. He was bold and nicely behaved; he had not come to woo the Princess, but only to hear her wisdom. She pleased him, and he pleased her."

"Yes, yes; for certain that was Kay," said Gerda. "He was so clever; he could do sums with fractions. Oh, won't you take me to the palace?"

"That is very easily said," answered the Crow. "But how are we to manage it? I'll speak to my tame sweetheart about it; she can tell us what to do; for so much I must tell you, such a little girl as you are will never get leave to go in the common way."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Gerda; "when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out at once to fetch me."

"Wait for me here on these steps," said the Crow. He wagged his head, and flew away.

When it grew dark the Crow came back. "Caw! caw!" said he. "I bring you a great many good wishes from her; and here is a bit of bread for you. She took it out of the kitchen,

where there is bread enough, and you are hungry, no doubt. It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for you are barefoot; the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it; but do not cry, you shall come in still. My sweetheart knows a little back-stair that leads to the chamber, and she knows where she can get the key of it."

And they went into the garden by the broad path, where one leaf was falling after the other; and when the lights in the palace were all put out, one after the other, the Crow led little Gerda to the back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with doubt and longing! It was just as if she had been about to do something wrong; and yet she only wanted to know if little Kay was there. Yes, he must be there. She called to mind his clear eyes and his long hair so vividly, she could quite see him as he used to laugh when they were sitting under the roses at home. He would surely be glad to see her — to hear what a long way she had come for his sake; to know how unhappy all at home were when he did not come back. Oh, what a fright and what a joy it was!

Now they were on the stairs. A single lamp was burning there; and on the floor stood the tame Crow, turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who bowed as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My intended has told me so much good of you, my dear young lady," said the tame Crow. "Your Life, as they call it, is very affecting. If you will take the lamp, I will go before. We will go straight on, for we shall meet no one."

"I think there is somebody just behind us," said Gerda; and it rushed past her: it was like shadows on the wall; horses with flowing manes and thin legs, huntsmen, ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"They are only dreams," said the Crow. "They come to fetch the thoughts of the fine folk to the chase; 't is well, for now you can see them asleep all the better. But let me find, when you come to have honor and fame, that you possess a grateful heart."

"Tut! that 's not worth talking about," said the Crow from the woods.

Now they came into the first hall, which was of rose-colored satin, with painted flowers on the wall. Here the dreams were rushing past, but they hurried by so quickly that Gerda could not see the fine people. One hall was more showy than the other; one might indeed well be abashed; and at last they came into the bed-chamber. The ceiling of the room was like a great palm-tree, with leaves of glass, of costly glass; and in the middle of the floor, from a thick golden stalk, hung two beds, each of which

was shaped like a lily. One was white, and in this lay the Princess: the other was red, and it was here that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent back one of the red leaves, and saw a brown neck — oh, that was Kay! She called him quite loud by name, held the lamp toward him — the dreams rushed again on horseback into the chamber — he awoke, turned his head, and — it was not little Kay!

The Prince was only like him about the neck; but he was young and handsome. And out of the white lily leaves the Princess peeped too, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda cried and told her whole history, and all that the Crows had done for her.

"Poor little thing!" said the Prince and the Princess, and they praised the Crows very much, and told them they were not at all angry with them, but they were not to do so again. However, they should have a reward.

"Will you fly about at liberty?" asked the Princess; "or would you like to have a steady place as court Crows with all the broken bits from the kitchen?"

And both the Crows nodded, and begged for a steady place; for they thought of their old age, and said, "it was a good thing to have something for the old folks," as the saying is.

And the Prince got up and let Gerda sleep in

his bed, and more than this he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good men and animals are!" and then she shut her eyes and slept soundly. All the dreams came flying in again, and they now looked like the angels; they drew a little sled, on which Kay sat and nodded his head; but the whole was only a dream, and so it was all gone as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was dressed from top to toe in silk and velvet. They offered to let her stay at the palace, and lead a happy life; but she begged only to have a little carriage with a horse in front, and for a small pair of shoes; then, she said, she would again go forth in the wide world and look for Kay.

And she got both shoes and a muff; she was dressed very nicely, too; and when she was about to set off, a new carriage stopped before the door. It was of pure gold, and the arms of the Prince and Princess shone like a star upon it; the coachman, the footmen, and the outriders, for outriders were there too, all wore golden crowns. The Prince and the Princess helped her into the carriage themselves, and wished her good luck. The Crow of the woods, who was now married, went with her for the first three miles. He sat beside Gerda, for he could not bear riding backward; the other Crow

stood in the doorway, and flapped her wings; she could not go with Gerda, because she suffered from headache since she had had a steady place, and ate so much. The carriage was lined inside with sugar-plums, and in the seats were fruits and cookies.

"Good-by! good-by!" cried Prince and Princess; and little Gerda wept, and the Crows wept. Thus passed the first miles; and then the Crow said good-by, and this was the worst good-by of all. He flew into a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the carriage, that shone from afar like the clear sunlight.

FIFTH STORY.

The Little Robber-Maiden.

They drove through the dark wood; but the carriage shone like a torch, and it dazzled the eyes of the robbers, so that they could not bear to look at it.

"'T is gold! 't is gold!" cried they; and they rushed forward, seized the horses, knocked down the little footboy, the coachman, and the servants, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is plump; she is nice! She must have

been fed on nut-kernels," said the old female Robber, who had a long, scrubby beard, and eyebrows that hung down over her eyes: "she is as good as a fatted lamb! how nice she will be!" And then she drew out her bright knife, and it shone so that it was quite dreadful.

"Oh!" cried the woman at the same moment. She had been bitten in the ear by her own little daughter, who hung at her back; and who was so wild and untamed that it was quite amusing to see her. "You naughty child!" said the mother; and now she had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little Robber-child: "she shall give me her muff, and her pretty frock; she shall sleep with me in my bed!" And then she gave her mother another bite, so that she jumped into the air and turned round and round; and all the robbers laughed, and said, "Look how she is dancing with the little ones!"

"I will go into the carriage," said the little Robber-maiden; and she would have her will, for she was very spoiled, and very stubborn. She and Gerda got in; and then away they drove over the stumps of felled trees, deeper and deeper into the woods. The little Robber-maiden was as tall as Gerda, but stronger, with broader shoulders, and of dark hue; her eyes

were quite black; they looked almost sad. She put her arms round little Gerda, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not vexed with you. You are, doubtless, a princess?"

"No," said little Gerda; and told her all that had happened to her, and how much she cared about little Kay.

The Robber-maiden looked at her with a serious air, nodded her head a little, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you: then I will do it myself;" and then she dried Gerda's eyes, and put both her hands into the handsome muff, which was so soft and warm.

At last the carriage stopped. They were in the midst of the court-yard of a robber's castle. It was full of cracks from top to bottom; and ravens and crows were flying out of the holes; and the great bulldogs, each of which looked as if he could swallow a man, jumped up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the midst of the large, old, smoking hall a great fire burnt on the stone floor. The smoke rose to the roof, and found its way out. In a big kettle soup was boiling; and rabbits and hares were roasting on a spit.

"You shall sleep with me to-night, with all my animals," said the Robber-maiden. They had something to eat and drink; and then went

into a corner, where straw and carpets were lying. Beside them, on laths and perches, sat nearly a hundred pigeons; all seemed to be asleep; but they moved a little when the children came.

"They are all mine," said the little Robber-maiden; and she caught hold of the nearest one, held it by the legs, and shook it so that its wings fluttered. "Kiss it!" she cried and flung the pigeon in Gerda's face. "Up there is the rabble of the wood," she went on, pointing to several sticks which were fastened before a hole high up in the wall; "that's the rabble; they would all fly away at once, if they were not well fastened in. And here is my dear old Bac;" and she laid hold of the horns of a reindeer, that had a bright copper ring round its neck, and was tied to the spot. "We have to lock this fellow in, too, or he would run away. Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp knife; that frightens him!" and the little girl drew forth a long knife from a crack in the wall, and let it glide over the reindeer's neck. The poor beast kicked; the Robber-maiden laughed, and pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Shall you keep your knife with you while you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it rather fearfully.

"I always sleep with the knife," said the little Robber-maiden: "there is no knowing what may happen. But tell me now, once more, what you told me about little Kay; and why you have gone out into the wide world."

Then Gerda told all, from the very beginning: the Wood-pigeons cooed above in their cage, and the others slept. The little Robber-maiden wound her arm round Gerda's neck, held the knife in the other hand, and slept, for one could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes, for she did not know whether she was to live or die. The Robbers sat round the fire, sang and drank; and the old female Robber jumped head over heels, so that it was dreadful for Gerda to see her.

Then the Wood-pigeons said, "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay! A white hen carries his sled; he sat in the carriage of the Snow-Queen, that darted past here, down over the wood, as we lay in our nest. She blew upon us young ones, and all died except us two. Coo! coo!"

"What is that you say up there?" cried little Gerda. "Where did the Snow-Queen go to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She is no doubt gone to Lapland; for there are always snow and ice there. Only ask the Reindeer, who is tied here by a cord."

"Ay, ice and snow indeed! There it is glorious and beautiful!" said the Reindeer. "One can spring about in the large, shining valleys! The Snow-Queen has her summer-tent there; but her fixed abode is high up towards the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay! little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Do you lie still!" said the Robber-maiden, "or you will get the knife!"

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood-pigeons had said; and the little Robber-maiden looked very serious, but she nodded her head, and said, "That 's no matter — that 's no matter. Do you know where Lapland lies?" asked she of the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" said the animal; and his eyes rolled in his head. "I was born and bred there; there I leapt about on the fields of snow."

"Listen," said the Robber-maiden to Gerda. "You see that all the men are gone; but my mother is still here, and she stays; but towards morning she takes a draught out of the large flask, and then she sleeps a little: then I will do something for you." She now jumped out of bed and flew to her mother; she put her arms round her neck, and pulling her by the beard, said, "My own sweet nanny-goat, good-morning!" And her mother took hold of her nose,

and pinched it till it was red and blue; but this was all done out of pure love.

When the mother had taken a sup at her flask, and was having a nap, the Robber-maiden went to the Reindeer, and said, "I should very much like to give you still many a tickling with the sharp knife, for then you are so funny; but no matter, I will untie you, and help you out, so that you may get back to Lapland. But you must make good use of your legs; and take this little girl of mine to the palace of the Snow-Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard, I suppose, all she said; for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer gave a bound for joy. The Robber-maiden lifted up little Gerda, and took care to bind her fast on the Reindeer's back; she even gave her a small cushion to sit on. "Here are your worsted stockings, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep for myself, it is so very pretty. For all that, you shall not freeze. Here are my mother's big mittens; they just reach to your elbow. On with them! Now your hands look just like those of my ugly old mother!"

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you fretting," said the little Robber-maiden. "This is just the time when you ought to look pleased. Here are two

loaves and a ham for you, so that you won't starve." The bread and the meat were fastened to the Reindeer's back; the little Robber-maiden opened the door, called in all the great dogs, and then with her knife cut the rope that tied the animal, and said to him, "Now off with you; but take good care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the large mittens toward the Robber-maiden, and said, "Good-by!" and the Reindeer flew on over bush and stump, through the great wood, over moor and heath, as fast as he could go.

"Ddsa! ddsa!" was heard in the sky. It was just as if somebody was sneezing.

"These are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer; "look how they gleam!" And on he now sped still quicker, night and day: the bread was eaten, and the ham too; and now they were in Lapland.

SIXTH STORY.

The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman.

They stood still before a little house; it was a poor place: the roof reached to the ground; the door was so low, that the family were obliged to creep upon their stomachs when they went in or out. Nobody was at home except an

old Lapland woman, who stood and dressed fish by the light of an oil lamp. The Reindeer told her the whole of Gerda's story, but first of all, his own; for that seemed to him much better worth hearing. Gerda was so chilled that she could not speak.

"Poor thing," said the Lapland woman, "you have far to run still. You have more than a hundred miles to go before you get to Finland; there the Snow-Queen has her country-house, and burns blue lights every evening. I will give you a few words from me, which I will write on a dried codfish, for paper I have none; this you can take with you to the Finland woman, and she will be able to tell you more than I can."

When Gerda had warmed herself, and had eaten and drunk, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, begged Gerda to take care of them, put her on the Reindeer again, bound her fast, and away sprang the animal. "Ddsa! ddsa!" was again heard in the air; the most charming blue lights burned the whole night in the sky, and at last they came to Finland. They knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman; for as to a door, she had none.

There was such a heat inside that the Finland woman herself went about almost naked. She was little and dirty. She at once loosened little

Gerda's clothes, pulled off her thick mittens and boots, for the heat would have been too great, and after laying a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, read what was written on the fish-skin. She read it three times; then she knew it by heart; so she put the fish into the cupboard, — for it might very well be eaten, and she never threw anything away.

The Reindeer told his own story first, and afterwards that of little Gerda; and the Finland woman winked her eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the Reindeer: "you can, I know, twist all the winds of the world together in a knot. If the sailor loosens one knot, then he has a good wind; if a second, then it blows pretty stiffly; if he undoes the third and fourth, then it rages so that the woods are blown down. Will you give the little maiden a drink, that she may possess the strength of twelve men, and conquer the Snow-Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finland woman; "much good that would be!" But she went to a shelf, and drew out a large skin rolled up. When she had unrolled it, strange letters were to be seen written on it; and the Finland woman read at such a rate, that the water ran down her forehead. But the Reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda

looked with such pleading eyes full of tears at the Finland woman, that she winked and drew the Reindeer aside into a corner, where she whispered to him, while he had some fresh ice put on his head.

"'T is true little Kay is at the Snow-Queen's, and finds everything there quite to his taste; and he thinks it the very best place in the world: but the reason of that is, he has a splinter of glass in his heart and a little grain of glass in his eye. These must be got out first; or else he will never go back to mankind, and the Snow-Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something so that she can have power over the whole?"

"I can give her no more power than what she has already. Don't you see how great it is? Don't you see how men and beasts are forced to serve her; how well she gets through the world on her bare feet? She must not hear of her power from us: that power lies in her heart, because she is a sweet and innocent child! If she cannot get to the Snow-Queen by herself, and rid little Kay of the glass, we cannot help her. Two miles hence the garden of the Snow-Queen begins; there you may carry the little girl. Set her down by the large bush that stands there in the snow, with red berries; don't stay talking, but hurry back as fast as possible." And now

the Finland woman placed little Gerda on the Reindeer's back, and off he ran with all imaginable speed.

"Oh! I have not got my boots! I have not brought my mittens!" cried little Gerda. She felt it in the cutting frost; but the Reindeer dared not stand still; on he ran till he came to the great bush with the red berries: and there he set Gerda down, kissed her mouth, while large, bright tears flowed from the animal's eyes, and then back he went as fast as he could. There stood poor Gerda now, without shoes without gloves, in the very middle of dreadful, icy Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could. There came a whole regiment of snowflakes, but they did not fall from above, and they were quite bright and shining from the Northern Lights. The flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda well remembered how large and strange the snowflakes looked when she saw them once through a glass; but now they were large and terrific in another manner — they were all alive. They were the outrunners of the Snow-Queen. They had the strangest shapes; some looked like large ugly porcupines; others like snakes knotted together, with their heads sticking out; and others, again, like small fat bears, with the hair standing on

end: all were of dazzling whiteness — all were living snowflakes.

Little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer. The cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which came like smoke out of her mouth. It grew thicker and thicker, and took the form of little angels, that grew more and more when they touched the earth. All had helmets on their heads, and lances and shields in their hands; there were more and more of them, and when Gerda had finished the Lord's Prayer, a whole legion was about her. They thrust at the horrid snowflakes with their spears, so that they flew into a thousand pieces: and little Gerda walked on bravely and safely. The angels patted her hands and feet: and then she felt the cold less, and went on quickly towards the palace of the Snow-Queen.

But now we shall see first how it was with Kay. He never thought of little Gerda, and least of all that she was standing before the palace.

SEVENTH STORY.

What took place in the Palace of the Snow-Queen, and what happened afterward.

The walls of the palace were of driving snow, and the windows and doors of cutting winds.

There were more than a hundred halls there, just as the snow was driven by the winds. The largest was many miles long; all were lighted by the great Northern Lights, and all were so large, so empty, so icy cold, and so shining! Mirth never reigned there; there was never even a little bear-ball, with the storm for music, while the polar bears went on their hind-legs and showed off their steps. Never a little tea-party of white young lady foxes; vast, cold, and empty were the halls of the Snow-Queen. The Northern Lights shone so that one could tell exactly when they were at their highest, and when they were at their lowest. In the middle of the empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake; it was cracked in a thousand pieces, but each piece was so just like the others, that it seemed the work of a cunning workman. In the middle of this lake sat the Snow-Queen when she was at home; and then she said she was sitting in the Mirror of Understanding, and that this was the only one and the best thing in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue, yes, nearly black with cold; but he did not notice it, for she had kissed away all feeling of cold from his body, and his heart was the same as a lump of ice. He was dragging along some sharp flat pieces of ice, which he laid together in all sorts of ways, for he

wanted to make something with them; just as we have little flat pieces of wood to make figures with, called the Chinese Puzzle. Kay made all sorts of figures, the most mixed up, for it was an ice puzzle. In his eyes the figures were very wonderful and of the highest value; for the bit of glass which was in his eyes caused this. He found whole figures which made a written word; but he never could manage to spell just the word he wanted — that word was "Eternity;" and the Snow-Queen had said, "If you can find that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will make you a present of the whole world and a pair of new skates." But he could not find it out.

"I am going now to the warm lands," said the Snow-Queen. "I must have a look down into the black kettles." It was the volcanoes of Vesuvius and Etna that she meant. "I will just give them a coating of white, for that is as it ought to be; besides, it is good for the oranges and grapes." And so away flew the Snow-Queen, and Kay sat quite alone in the empty halls of ice that were miles long, and looked at the blocks of ice, and thought and thought till his skull was almost cracked. There he sat quite stiff and still; one would believe he was frozen to death.

Then it was that little Gerda stepped through

the great gate into the palace. The gate was formed of cutting winds; but Gerda repeated her evening prayer, and the winds were laid as though they slept; and she entered the vast, empty, cold halls. There she saw Kay: she knew him, she flew to put her arms about him, held him tight, and cried, "Kay, sweet little Kay! Have I then found you at last?"

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda shed hot tears; and they fell on his breast, they pressed into his heart, they thawed the lumps of ice, and burned away the splinters of the looking-glass; he looked at her, and she sang the hymn:—

> "The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
> The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept so much that the splinter rolled out of his eye, and he knew her, and shouted, "Gerda, sweet little Gerda! where have you been so long? And where have I been?" He looked round him. "How cold it is here!" said he: "how empty and cold!" And he held fast by Gerda, who laughed and wept for joy. It was so beautiful, that even the blocks of ice danced about for joy; and when they were tired and laid themselves down, they formed just the letters which the Snow-Queen had told him to find out; so

now he was his own master, and he would have the whole world, and a pair of new skates.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they grew quite blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was again well and merry. The Snow-Queen might come back as soon as she liked; there stood his release written in the shining masses of ice.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the large hall; they talked of their old grandmother, and of the roses upon the roof; and wherever they went, the winds were quiet, and the sun burst forth. And when they reached the bush with the red berries, they found the Reindeer waiting for them. He had brought another, a young one, with him, whose udder was filled with milk, which he gave to the little ones, and kissed their lips. So they carried Kay and Gerda, — first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves in the warm room, and learned what they were to do on their journey home; and then they went to the Lapland woman, who made some new clothes for them and repaired their sleds.

The Reindeer and the young deer leaped along beside them, and went with them to the edge of the country. Here the first green leaves peeped forth; here Kay and Gerda took

leave of the Reindeer and the Lapland woman. "Farewell! farewell!" said they all. And the first little birds began to twitter; the woods had green buds; and out of the wood came, riding on a fine horse which Gerda knew (it was one of the horses in the golden carriage), a young damsel with a bright red cap on her head, and armed with pistols. It was the little Robber-maiden, who was tired of being at home, and had set out to make a journey to the north; and afterwards somewhere else, if that did not please her. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too. It was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow for tramping about," said she to little Kay; "I should like to know if you deserve that one should run from one end of the world to the other for your sake!"

But Gerda patted her on the cheek, and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They are gone abroad," said the other.

"But the Crow?" asked little Gerda.

"Oh! the Crow is dead," she answered. "His tame sweetheart is a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg; she weeps and weeps, but it's all mere talk and stuff! Now tell me what you've been doing, and how you made out to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay both told her their story.

And "Snip-snap-snurre-basselurre," said the Robber-maiden; and she took the hands of each, and said that if she should some day pass through the town where they lived, she would come and visit them; and then away she rode into the wide world.

But Kay and Gerda went hand in hand, and as they went it was lovely spring weather, with flowers and green leaves. The church-bells rang, and the children knew the high towers, and the large town; it was that in which they lived; and they went in, and came to the door of grandmother's house, and up the stairs, into the room, where everything stood as it stood before.

The clock said "Tick! tack!" and the hands moved round; but as they went through the doorway they saw that they were now grown up. The roses on the roof hung blooming in at the open window; there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down on them, each on his own, holding each other by the hand; they both had forgotten as a dream the cold, empty splendor of the Snow-Queen.

The grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine, and read aloud from the Bible: "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

And Kay and Gerda looked in each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn: —

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
The Child Jesus is there the children to greet."

There sat the two grown-up persons; grown-up, and yet children; children in heart: and it was summer-time; warm, happy summer!

THE FLAX.

THE Flax stood in blossom; it had pretty little blue flowers, dainty as the wings of a moth and even more soft. The sun shone on the Flax, and the rain clouds dropped water on it, and this was just as good for it as it is for little children to be washed, and then get a kiss from their mother; they become much prettier for that, and so did the Flax.

"Folks say that I stand uncommonly well," said the Flax, "and that I am so fine and long, they will make a capital piece of linen out of me. How happy I am! I'm certainly the happiest of beings. How well off I am! And I may come to something! How the sunshine gladdens, and the rain tastes good and refreshes me! I'm wonderfully happy; I'm the happiest of beings."

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the Fence-post. "You don't know the world, but we do, for we have knots in us;" and then it creaked out mournfully, —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellure!
The song is done."

"No it is not done," said the Flax, "the rain does me good; the sun will shine to-morrow. I can feel how I 'm growing, I feel that I have flowers! I 'm the happiest of beings."

But one day the people came and took the Flax by the head and pulled it up by the root. That hurt; and it was laid in water as if it was to be drowned, and then put on the fire as if it were going to be roasted. That was fearful.

"One can't always have good times," said the Flax. "One must try something if he is to get to know something."

But bad times certainly came. The Flax was wet and roasted, and broken, and hackled, — yes that was what they called it. It was put on the spinning-wheel — whirr! whirr! whirr! — it was not possible to collect one's thoughts.

"I have been uncommonly happy," it thought in all its pain. "One must be glad with the good one has enjoyed. Glad! glad! Oh!" And it continued to say that when it was put into the loom, and till it became a large, beautiful piece of linen. All the Flax, to the last stalk, was used in making one piece.

"But this is truly wonderful! I never should have believed it! What good luck I have! The Fence-post knows all about it, truly, with its —

'Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellure!'

The song is not done by any means. It is only just begun. It is wonderful. If I've suffered something, I've been made into something! I'm the happiest of all! How strong and fine I am, how white and long! That is something more than being only a stalk, even if one bears flowers. One is not taken care of, and gets water only when it rains. Now I am waited on. The maid turns me over every morning, and I get a shower bath from the watering-pot every evening. Yes, the parson's wife has even made a speech about me, and says I'm the best piece in the whole parish. I cannot possibly be happier!"

Now the Linen was taken into the house, and put under the scissors: how they cut and tore it; and then pricked it with needles before they made anything of it! That was not pleasant; but it was made into twelve napkins.

"Just look! Now something has really been made of me! So; that was my fate. Well, that is a blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, and that's right, and that's a true pleasure! We've been made into twelve things, but yet we're all one and the same; we're just a dozen: how charming that is!"

Years rolled on, and then they could hold together no longer.

"It must be over one day," said each piece.

"I would gladly have held together a little longer, but one must not ask for what cannot be."

And so they were torn into pieces and fragments. They thought it was all over now, for they were hacked to shreds, and softened, and boiled; they did not know what it all was; and then they became beautiful white paper.

"Now, that is a surprise, and a glorious surprise!" said the Paper. "Now I 'm finer than before, and I shall be written on: what can they not write on me! this is the best luck of all."

And really the most beautiful stories and verses were written upon it. And the people heard what was upon it; it was so true and good, that it made people truer and better: there was a great blessing in the words that were on this Paper.

"That is more than I ever dreamed of when I was a little blue flower in the fields. How could I fancy that I should ever spread joy and knowledge among men? I can't yet understand it myself, but it really is so. Our Lord knows that I have done nothing at all but what I had to do after my poor fashion, to keep alive. And yet I have been carried from one joy and honor to another. Each time when I think 'the song is done,' it begins again in a higher and better way. Now I shall set out on my journey. I

shall be sent through the world, so that all people may read me. That is most likely. Once I had blue flowers; now I have for every flower a charming thought. I 'm the happiest of beings."

But the Paper was not sent on its travels, — it was sent to the printer, and everything that was written upon it was set up in type for a book; yes, for many hundreds of books, for in this way a very far greater number could get gain and gladness than if the one paper on which it was written had run about the world, to be worn out before it had got half way.

"Yes, that is certainly the wisest way," thought the Writing-paper. "I really did not think of that. I shall stay at home, and be held in honor, just like an old grandfather; it is I, that am written on; the words flowed into me from the pen. The books come from me. Now something can really come of all this. I am the happiest of all."

Then the Paper was tied together in a bundle, and laid on the shelf.

"It is good to rest after work," said the Paper. "It is very well to collect one's thoughts, and to come to some notion of what is in one. Now I 'm able for the first time to think of what is in me; and to know one's self, that is true progress. I wonder what will be done with me now? Something will happen to carry me further; I 'm always going further."

Now, one day all the Paper was taken out and laid by on the hearth; it was to be burned, for it was not to be sold to the grocer, to be put round butter and brown sugar. And all the children in the house stood round about, for they wanted to see the Paper blaze up, and afterwards to see the red sparks among the ashes, which would run away and go out, one after the other, in such haste — they were children coming out of school, and the last spark of all was the schoolmaster. After they thought he had gone, then he would come along after all the others.

All the old Paper lay in a bundle upon the fire. Whew! how it flew up in a flame. "Whew!" it said, and in a twinkling, it was all on fire. The flame went up into the air so high, higher than the Flax had ever been able to lift its little blue flowers, and gleamed as the white Linen had never been able to gleam. All the written letters turned for a moment quite red, and all the words and thoughts turned to flame.

"Now I 'm mounting straight up to the sun," said a voice in the flame; and it was as if a thousand voices said this in one voice; and the flames mounted up through the chimney and out at the top, and more delicate than the flames, quite unseen by human eyes, little tiny beings floated there, as many as there had been blos-

soms on the flax. They were lighter even than the flame from which they were born; and when the flame was out, and nothing remained of the Paper but black ashes, they danced over it once more, and where they moved, they left foot-prints — these were the little red sparks. The children came out of school, and the school-master was the last of all. That was fun! and the children stood and sang over the dead ashes, —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Bassellure!
The song is done!"

But the unseen beings each said, —

"The song is never done, that is best of all. I know it, and therefore I am the happiest of all."

But the children could neither hear that nor understand it; nor ought they, for children must not know everything.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

I.

THE REAL NIGHTINGALE.

In China, you must know, the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all whom he has about him are Chinamen too. It happened a good many years ago, but that's just why it's worth while to hear the story, before it is forgotten.

The Emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world; it was made wholly of fine porcelain, very costly, but so brittle and so hard to handle that one had to take care how one touched it. In the garden were to be seen the most wonderful flowers, and to the prettiest of them silver bells were tied, which tinkled, so that nobody should pass by without noticing the flowers.

Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was nicely set out, and it reached so far that the gardener himself did not know where the end was. If a man went on and on, he came into a glorious forest with high trees and deep lakes.

The wood went straight down to the sea, which was blue and deep; great ships could sail to and fro beneath the branches of the trees; and in the trees lived a Nightingale, which sang so finely that even the poor Fisherman, who had many other things to do, stopped still and listened, when he had gone out at night to throw out his nets, and heard the Nightingale.

"How beautiful that is!" he said; but he had to attend to his work, and so he forgot the bird. But the next night, when the bird sang again, and the Fisherman heard it, he said as before, "How beautiful that is!"

From all the countries of the world travelers came to the city of the Emperor and admired it, and the palace, and the garden, but when they heard the Nightingale, they all said, "That is the best of all!"

And the travelers told of it when they came home; and the learned men wrote many books about the town, the palace, and the garden. But they did not forget the Nightingale; that was spoken of most of all; and all those who were poets wrote great poems about the Nightingale in the wood by the deep lake.

The books went all over the world, and a few of them once came to the Emperor. He sat in his golden chair, and read, and read: every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him

to hear the fine things that were said about the city, the palace, and the garden. "But the Nightingale is the best of all!" — it stood written there.

"What's that?" exclaimed the Emperor. "The Nightingale? I don't know that at all! Is there such a bird in my empire, and in my garden to boot? I've never heard of that. One has to read about such things."

Hereupon he called his Cavalier, who was so grand that if any one lower in rank than he dared to speak to him, or to ask him any question, he answered nothing but "P!" — and that meant nothing.

"There is said to be a strange bird here called a Nightingale!" said the Emperor. "They say it is the best thing in all my great empire. Why has no one ever told me anything about it?"

"I have never heard it named," replied the Cavalier. "It has never been presented at court."

"I command that it shall come here this evening, and sing before me," said the Emperor. "All the world knows what I have, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never heard it mentioned," said the Cavalier. "I will seek for it. I will find it."

But where was he to be found? The Cava-

lier ran up and down all the stairs, through halls and passages, but no one among all those whom he met had heard talk of the Nightingale. And the Cavalier ran back to the Emperor, and said that it must be a fable made up by those who write books.

"Your Imperial Majesty must not believe what is written. It is fiction, and something that they call the black art."

"But the book in which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and so it cannot be a falsehood. I will hear the Nightingale! It must be here this evening! It has my high favor; and if it does not come, all the court shall be trampled upon after the court has supped!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the Cavalier; and again he ran up and down all the stairs, and through all the halls and passages, and half the court ran with him, for the courtiers did not like being trampled upon. There was a great inquiry after the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew, but not the people at court.

At last they met with a poor little girl in the kitchen. She said, —

"The Nightingale? I know it well; yes, how it can sing! Every evening I get leave to carry my poor sick mother the scraps from the table. She lives down by the beach, and when I get

back and am tired, and rest in the wood, then I hear the Nightingale sing. And then the tears come into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me!"

"Little Kitchen-girl," said the Cavalier, "I will get you a fixed place in the kitchen, with leave to see the Emperor dine, if you will lead us to the Nightingale, for it is promised for this evening."

So they all went out into the wood where the Nightingale was wont to sing; half the court went out. When they were on the way a cow began to low.

"Oh!" cried the court pages, "now we have it! That shows a great power in so small a creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are cows mooing!" said the little Kitchen-girl. "We are a long way from the place yet."

Now the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

"Glorious!" said the Chinese Court Preacher. "Now I hear it — it sounds just like little church bells."

"No, those are frogs!" said the little Kitchen-maid. "But now I think we shall soon hear it."

And then the Nightingale began to sing.

"That is it!" exclaimed the little Girl. "Listen, listen! and yonder it sits."

And she pointed to a little gray bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" cried the Cavalier. "I should never have thought it looked like that! How simple it looks! It must certainly have lost its color at seeing so many famous people around."

"Little Nightingale!" called the little Kitchen-maid, quite loudly, "our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" replied the Nightingale, and sang so that it was a joy to hear it.

"It sounds just like glass bells!" said the Cavalier. "And look at its little throat, how it's working! It's wonderful that we should never have heard it before. That bird will be a great success at court."

"Shall I sing once more before the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was present.

"My excellent little Nightingale," said the Cavalier, "I have great pleasure in inviting you to a court festival this evening, when you shall charm his Imperial Majesty with your beautiful singing."

"My song sounds best in the greenwood!" replied the Nightingale; still it came willingly when it heard what the Emperor wished.

In the palace there was a great brushing up. The walls and the floor, which were of porcelain, shone with many thousand golden lamps. The most glorious flowers, which could ring clearly, had been placed in the halls. There was a running to and fro, and a draught of air, but all the bells rang so exactly together that one could not hear any noise.

In the midst of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole court was there, and the little Cook-maid had leave to stand behind the door, as she had now received the title of a real cook-maid. All were in full dress, and all looked at the little gray bird, to which the Emperor nodded.

And the Nightingale sang so gloriously that the tears came into the Emperor's eyes, and the tears ran down over his cheeks; and then the Nightingale sang still more sweetly; that went straight to the heart. The Emperor was happy, and he said the Nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear round its neck. But the Nightingale thanked him, it had already got reward enough.

"I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes — that is the real treasure to me. An emperor's tears have a strange power. I am paid enough!" Then it sang again with a sweet, glorious voice.

"That 's the most lovely way of making love I ever saw!" said the ladies who stood round about, and then they took water in their mouths to gurgle when any one spoke to them. They thought they should be nightingales too. And the lackeys and maids let it be known that they were pleased too; and that was saying a good deal, for they are the hardest of all to please. In short, the Nightingale made a real hit.

It was now to remain at court, to have its own cage, with freedom to go out twice every day and once at night. It had twelve servants, and they all had a silken string tied to the bird's leg which they held very tight. There was really no pleasure in going out.

The whole city spoke of the wonderful bird, and when two people met, one said nothing but "Nightin," and the other said "gale;" and then they sighed, and understood one another. Eleven storekeepers' children were named after the bird, but not one of them could sing a note.

II.

THE TOY NIGHTINGALE.

One day a large parcel came to the Emperor, on which was written "The Nightingale."

"Here we have a new book about this famous bird," said the Emperor.

But it was not a book; it was a little work of art, that lay in a box, a toy nightingale, which was to sing like a live one, but it was all covered with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. So soon as the toy bird was wound up, he could sing one of the pieces that the real one sang, and then his tail moved up and down, and shone with silver and gold. Round his neck hung a little ribbon, and on that was written, "The Emperor of Japan's Nightingale is poor beside that of the Emperor in China."

"That is capital!" said they all, and he who had brought the toy bird at once got the title, Imperial Head-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now they must sing together; what a duet that will be!"

And so they had to sing together; but it did not sound very well, for the real Nightingale sang in its own way, and the toy bird sang waltzes.

"That's not its fault," said the Play-master; "it's quite perfect, and very much in my style."

Now the toy bird was to sing alone. It made just as much of a hit as the real one, and then it was so much more fine to look at — it shone like bracelets and breastpins.

Three-and-thirty times over did it sing the same piece, and yet was not tired. The people would gladly have heard it again, but the Emperor said that the living Nightingale ought to sing a little something. But where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown away, out of the open window, back to its green woods.

"But what is become of it?" asked the Emperor.

Then all the courtiers scolded, and thought the Nightingale was a very thankless creature.

"We have the best bird, after all," said they.

And so the toy bird had to sing again, and this was the thirty-fourth time they had listened to the same piece. For all that, they did not know it quite by heart, for it was so very difficult. And the Play-master praised the bird highly; yes, he declared that it was better than the real Nightingale, not only in its feathers and its many beautiful diamonds, but inside as well.

"For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all, your Imperial Majesty, with the real

Nightingale one can never make sure what is coming, but in this toy bird everything is settled. It is just so, and not any other way. One can explain it; one can open it and can show how much thought went to making it, where the waltzes come from, how they go, and how one follows another."

"Those are quite our own ideas," they all said. And the Play-master got leave to show the bird to the people on the next Sunday. The people were to hear it sing too, said the Emperor; and they did hear it, and were as much pleased as if they had all had tea, for that's quite the Chinese fashion; and they all said, "Oh!" and held their forefingers up in the air and nodded. But the poor Fisherman, who had heard the real Nightingale, said, —

"It sounds pretty enough, and it's a little like, but there's something wanting, though I know not what!"

The real Nightingale was exiled from the land and empire.

The toy bird had its place on a silken cushion close to the Emperor's bed; all the presents it had received, gold and precious stones, were ranged about it; in title it had come to be the High Imperial After-Dinner-Singer, and in rank, it was number one on the left hand; for the Emperor reckoned that side the most important on

which the heart is placed, and even in an emperor the heart is on the left side; and the Playmaster wrote a work of five-and-twenty volumes about the toy bird; it was so learned and so long, full of the most difficult Chinese words, that all the people said they had read it, and understood it, or else they would have been thought stupid, and would have had their bodies trampled on.

So a whole year went by. The Emperor, the court, and all the other Chinese knew every little twitter in the toy bird's song by heart. But just for that reason it pleased them best — they could sing with it themselves, and they did so. The street boy sang, "Tsi-tsi-tsi-glug-glug!" and the Emperor himself sang it too. Yes, that was certainly famous.

But one evening, when the toy bird was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed and heard it, something inside the bird said, "Svup!" Something cracked. "Whir-r-r!" All the wheels ran round, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor jumped at once out of bed, and had his own doctor called; but what could he do? Then they sent for a watchmaker, and after a good deal of talking and looking, he got the bird into some sort of order, but he said that it must be looked after a good deal, for the

barrels were worn, and he could not put new ones in in such a manner that the music would go. There was a great to-do; only once in a year did they dare to let the bird sing, and that was almost too much. But then the Play-master made a little speech, full of heavy words, and said this was just as good as before — and so of course it was as good as before.

III.

THE REAL NIGHTINGALE AGAIN.

Five years had gone by, and a real grief came upon the whole nation. The Chinese were really fond of their Emperor, and now he was sick, and could not, it was said, live much longer. Already a new Emperor had been chosen, and the people stood out in the street and asked the Cavalier how their old Emperor did.

"P!" said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his great, gorgeous bed; the whole court thought him dead, and each one ran to pay respect to the new ruler. The chamberlains ran out to talk it over, and the ladies'-maids had a great coffee-party. All about, in all the halls and passages, cloth had been laid down so that no one could

be heard go by, and therefore it was quiet there, quite quiet. But the Emperor was not dead yet: stiff and pale he lay on the gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels; high up, a window stood open, and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the toy bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was just as if something lay upon his breast: he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death who sat upon his breast, and had put on his golden crown, and held in one hand the Emperor's sword, and in the other his beautiful banner. And all around, from among the folds of the splendid velvet curtains, strange heads peered forth; a few very ugly, the rest quite lovely and mild. These were all the Emperor's bad and good deeds, that stood before him now that Death sat upon his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered one to the other. "Do you remember that?" and then they told him so much that the sweat ran from his forehead.

"I did not know that!" said the Emperor. "Music! music! the great Chinese drum!" he cried, "so that I need not hear all they say!"

And they kept on, and Death nodded like a Chinaman to all they said.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor. "You

little precious golden bird, sing, sing! I have given you gold and costly presents; I have even hung my golden slipper around your neck — sing now, sing!"

But the bird stood still; no one was there to wind him up, and he could not sing without that; but Death kept on staring at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and it was quiet, fearfully quiet.

Then there sounded close by the window, the most lovely song. It was the little live Nightingale, that sat outside on a spray. It had heard of the Emperor's need, and had come to sing to him of trust and hope. And as it sang the spectres grew paler and paler; the blood ran more and more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs; and Death himself listened, and said, —

"Go on, little Nightingale, go on!"

"But will you give me that splendid golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up each of these treasures for a song. And the Nightingale sang on and on; it sang of the quiet church-yard where the white roses grow, where the elder-blossom smells sweet, and where the fresh grass is wet with the tears of mourners. Then Death felt a longing to see his garden, and floated out at the window in the form of a cold, white mist.

"Thanks! thanks!" said the Emperor. "You heavenly little bird! I know you well. I drove you from my land and empire, and yet you have charmed away the evil faces from my bed, and driven Death from my heart! How can I pay you?"

"You have paid me!" replied the Nightingale. "I drew tears from your eyes, the first time I sang — I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that make a singer's heart glad. But now sleep and grow fresh and strong again. I will sing you something."

And it sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep. Ah! how mild and refreshing that sleep was! The sun shone upon him through the windows, when he awoke strong and sound; not one of his servants had yet come back, for they all thought he was dead; but the Nightingale still sat beside him and sang.

"You must always stay with me," said the Emperor. "You shall sing as you please; and I'll break the toy bird into a thousand pieces."

"Not so," replied the Nightingale. "It did well as long as it could; keep it as you have done till now. I cannot build my nest in the palace to dwell in it, but let me come when I feel the wish; then I will sit in the evening on the spray yonder by the window, and sing for you, so that you may be glad and thoughtful

at once. I will sing of those who are happy and of those who suffer. I will sing of good and of evil that remain hidden round about you. The little singing bird flies far around, to the poor fisherman, to the peasant's roof, to every one who dwells far away from you and from your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has an air of sanctity about it. I will come and sing to you — but one thing you must promise me."

"Everything!" said the Emperor; and he stood there in his royal robes, which he had put on himself, and pressed the sword which was heavy with gold to his heart.

"One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything. Then all will go well."

And the Nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look on their dead Emperor, and — yes, there he stood, and the Emperor said, "Good-morning!"

WHAT THE MOON SAW.

"It was in a little town; I saw it last year, but that is no matter, I saw it so clearly. I read about it to-night in a paper, but that was not at all clear. Down in an inn there sat a man who leads a dancing-bear about. He was eating his supper, and the bear was tied outside behind the woodpile. Poor bear! he never did any harm, though he was so fierce to look at.

"Up in the attic three small children were playing about in my bright light. The eldest was just six years old; the youngest was not more than two years old. Crack! crack! it came up the stairs. Who could it be?

"The door flew open — it was the bear, the big, shaggy bear. He was tired of staying down there in the yard, and now found his way upstairs. I saw it all," said the Moon.

"The children were so scared by the big, shaggy beast, they crept, each into a corner. The bear found them all three, and pushed at them with his nose, but he did not hurt them. 'He must be a big dog,' they thought, and so they stroked him. He lay down on the floor;

the smallest child rolled over him and hid his curly head in the bear's thick, black fur.

"Then the eldest boy took his drum and beat it, bang, bang! Up jumped the bear upon his hind legs, and began to dance — that was fun! Each boy took his gun; the bear must have one too, and he held it tight as a soldier holds his.

"There 's a comrade for you, my lads! Away they marched, one, two — one, two.

"The door opened all at once, and the mother of the children came in. You should have seen her! She could not speak, she was in such terror; her cheeks were as white as a sheet, and her eyes were fixed with horror. But the youngest boy laughed and nodded, and cried, —

"'Mamma, we are playing soldier.'

"At that moment; the master of the bear came quickly in."

THE TOAD.

THE well was deep, and so the rope was long; the wheel went heavily round, before one could hoist the bucket over the side of the well. The sun could never see its face in the water, however clear it was down there; but as far as it could shine there were green weeds growing between the stones.

A family of the toad race dwelt here. They had come from abroad; indeed, they had all come plump down in the person of the old toad-mother, who was still alive. The green frogs who came long before were at home here, and swam about in the water, but they knew their cousins, and called them the "well-guests." These quite made up their minds to stay here; they found themselves well off on the dry land, as they called the wet stones.

Dame Frog had once traveled. She had ridden in the bucket as it went up; but the light was too much for her, and gave her a pain in the eyes; luckily, she slipped out of the bucket. She fell with a frightful splash into the water, and was laid up for three days with the backache. She

had not much to tell about the upper world, but one thing she did know, and so did all the others now, — that the well was not the whole world.

Dame Toad might have told them a thing or two more but she never answered when they asked her anything, and so they left off asking.

"Nasty, ugly, squat, and fat she is!" said the young Green Frogs; "and her brats are getting just like her."

"May be so!" said Dame Toad; "but one of them has a jewel in its head, or else I have it myself."

The Green Frogs listened and stared, and as they did not like to hear that, they made faces and went to the bottom. But the young Toads stretched their hind-legs out of sheer pride.

Each of them thought it had the jewel, and so they all kept their heads quite still; but at last they began to ask what sort of a thing they had to be proud of, and just what a jewel was.

"It is something so splendid and so precious," said Dame Toad, "that I cannot describe it; it is something that one wears to please one's self, and that others fret to death after. But don't ask questions; I sha'n't answer them."

"Well, I have not got the jewel," said the smallest Toad, which was as ugly as ugly could be. "How should I have anything so splendid? and if it vexed others, why, it could not please me.

No; all I want is just once to get up to the well-side, and have one peep out; that would be glorious!"

"Better stay where you are," said the old one. "Here you are at home, and you know what it's like. Keep clear of the bucket, or it may squash you. And even if you get safe into it, you may fall out again, and it is not every one that can fall so luckily as I did, and keep legs and eggs all safe and sound."

"Quack!" said the little one; and that means the same as when we men say "Alack!"

It did so long to get up to the well-side, and look out; it felt quite a yearning after the green things up yonder. And so, next morning, as the bucket was going up, full of water, when it happened to stop for a moment before the stone where the Toad sat, the little creature fell a-trembling, and hopped into the bucket. It sank to the bottom of the water, which was now drawn up and poured out.

"Pugh, what a looking thing!" said the man, when he saw it; "it is the ugliest I have ever seen." He kicked with his wooden shoe at the Toad, which was near being crippled, but made out to get into the middle of some tall nettles.

It saw stalks side by side around it, and it looked upward too. The sun shone on the leaves; one could see through them. For the Toad it

was the same as it is for us men when we come all at once into a great wood, where the sun is shining between leaves and branches.

"It is much prettier here than down in the well! One might well stop here for one's whole life-time," said the little Toad. It lay there one hour, it lay there two hours. "Now I wonder what there is outside; as I have gone so far, I may as well go further." And it crawled as fast as it could crawl, till it came out into the road, where the sun shone on it and the dust made it white, as it marched across the high road.

"This is something like being on dry land," said the Toad. "I am getting almost too much of a good thing; it tickles right into me."

Now it came to a ditch; the forget-me-not grew here, and the meadow-sweet; there was a live hedge of white-thorn and elder-bushes, and four-o-clocks crept and hung about it. Here were fine colors to be seen! And yonder flew a butterfly.

The Toad thought that it was a flower which had broken loose, in order to look about it in the world; it really seemed so very natural.

"If one could only get along like that!" said the Toad. "Quack — alack! Oh, how glorious!"

It stayed eight days and nights by the ditch, and felt no want of food. The ninth day it thought, "Further — forward!" But was there anything more beautiful to be found then? per-

haps a little toad or some green frogs; there had been a sound in the wind last night, as if there were "cousins" near by.

"It is a fine thing to live! to come up out of the well; to lie in nettles; to creep along a dusty road; and to rest in a wet ditch! But forward still! let us find out frogs or a little toad; one cannot do without them, after all; nature, by itself, is not enough for one!" And so it set out again on its wanderings.

It came to a field and a large pond, with rushes round it; it took a look inside.

"It is too wet for you here, is n't it?" said the Frogs, "but you are quite welcome. Are you a he or a she? — not that it matters, you are welcome all the same."

And so it was asked to a concert in the evening — a family concert, great to-do and thin voices! we all know that sort of thing. There was a supper, only water, but that was free to all — the whole pond, if they pleased.

"Now I shall travel further," said the Toad. It was always craving something better.

It saw the stars twinkle, large and clear; it saw the new moon shine; it saw the sun rise higher and higher.

"I think I am still in the well, in a larger well: I must get higher up! I feel an unrest, a longing!" And when the moon had grown full and

round the poor creature thought, "I wonder if that is the bucket which is being let down, and which I must pop into if I wish to get higher up? Or is the sun the great bucket? How great it is, and how it shines! It could hold all of us together. I must watch for a chance. Ah, how bright it is in my head! I do not believe that the jewel can shine better. The jewel! I have it not, and shall not cry after it. No; higher still in glitter and gladness! I feel that I am in the right way, and yet I have a fear! It is a hard step to take, but it must be taken. Forward! right on along the high road!"

And it stepped out as well as such a scrambling creature can, till it came to the great main road, where the men lived. Here there were flower-gardens and cabbage-gardens. It turned aside to rest in a cabbage-garden.

"How many strange beings there are, which I know nothing about! and how great and blessed is the world! But one must keep looking about one, and not be sitting always in one corner." And so it hopped into the cabbage-garden. "How green it is here! how pretty it is here!"

"That I know well enough," said the Caterpillar, on the leaf. "My leaf is the largest here; it covers half the world — but as for the world, I can do without it."

"Cluck! cluck!" said somebody, and fowls came tripping into the cabbage-garden. The foremost hen was long-sighted; she spied the worm on the curly leaf, and pecked at it, so that it fell to the ground, where it lay twisting and turning. The Hen looked first with one eye and then with the other, for she could not make out what was to be the end of all this wriggling.

"It does not do this of its own accord," thought the Hen, and lifted her head to give it a clip. The Toad grew so frightened that it scrambled up against the Hen.

"So it has friends to fight for it," said she; "just look at the crawler!" and the Hen turned tail. "I sha'n't trouble myself about the little green mouthful; it only gives one a tickling in the throat." The other fowls were of the same opinion, and away they went.

"I have wriggled away from her," said the Caterpillar; "it is good to have presence of mind, but the hardest task remains, to get up on my cabbage-leaf. Where is it?"

And the little Toad came forward and said some kind words. It was glad of its own ugliness, that had frightened away the Hen.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the Caterpillar. "I got rid of her myself, I tell you. You are very unpleasant to look at! May n't I be allowed to get back into my

own? Now I smell cabbage. Now I am near my leaf. There is nothing so nice as one's own. I must go higher up still."

"Yes, higher up!" said the little Toad, "higher up! it feels just as I feel; but it is not in good humor to-day; that comes of the fright. We all wish to get higher up." And it looked up as high as it could.

The Stork sat in his nest on the farmer's roof; he chattered, and the stork-mother chattered.

"How high they live," thought the Toad. "Pity that one can't get up there!"

There were two young students lodging in the farmhouse; one of them was a poet, the other a naturalist. The one sang and wrote in gladness of all that God had made, just as it shone in his own heart; he sang it out short and clear, and rich in ringing verses. The other took hold of the thing itself; ay, and split it up, if necessary. He treated our Lord's creation like some vast piece of arithmetic: subtracted, multiplied, wished to know it outside and inside, and to talk of it with reason; nothing but reason; and he talked of it in gladness too, and cleverly. They were good, glad-hearted men, both of them.

"Yonder sits a fine example of a toad," said the Naturalist; "I must have it in spirits."

"You have two already," said the Poet. "Let it sit in peace, and enjoy itself."

"But it is so beautifully ugly!" said the other.

"Yes, if we could find the jewel in its head," said the Poet, "then I myself might lend a hand in splitting it up."

"The jewel!" said the other. "Much you know about natural history!"

"But is there not something very fine in the popular belief that the toad, the ugliest of creatures, often hides in its head the most precious of all jewels? Is it not much the same with men? Was there not such a jewel hidden in Æsop, and Socrates too?"

The Toad heard nothing more; and even so far it did not understand half of it. The two friends went on, and it escaped being put into spirits.

"They were talking about the jewel, too," said the Toad. "I am just as well without it; otherwise I should have got into trouble."

There was a chatter, chatter, upon the farmer's roof. Father Stork was giving a lecture to his family, while they all looked down with their heads on one side at the two young men in the cabbage-garden.

"Men are the most vain creatures," said the Stork. "Hark, how they are going on, — chat-

ter, chatter, — and yet they cannot beat a regular tattoo. They puff themselves up with notions of their fine speech, — their language. A rare language, indeed; it shifts from one jabber to another, at every day's journey. One person does not understand the next. Our language we can talk the whole world over, whether in Denmark or in Egypt. As for flying, they can't manage it at all. They push along by means of an affair which they call a 'railway,' but there they often get their necks broken. It gives me the shivers in my bill when I think of it. The world can exist without men. We can do without them. All we want are frogs and earthworms."

"That was a grand speech now," thought the little Toad. "What a great man he is, and how high he sits; higher than I have ever seen any one before; and how well he can swim," it cried, as the Stork took flight through the air with outstretched wings.

And Mother Stork talked in the nest. She told of the land of Egypt, of the water of the Nile, and of the first-rate mud that was to be found in foreign parts; it sounded quite fresh and charming in the ears of the little Toad.

"I must go to Egypt," it said. "If the Stork would only give me a lift; or one of the young ones might take me. I would do the

youngster some service in my turn, on his wedding-day. I am sure I shall get to Egypt, for I am so lucky; and all the longing and the joy I am having are better than having a jewel in one's head."

And it had it, — the true jewel; the eternal longing and joy — upward, ever upward. This was the jewel, and it shone within the Toad, shone with gladness and beamed with desire.

At that very moment came the Stork. He had seen the Toad in the grass, and he swooped down and took hold of the little creature, not over tenderly. The bill pinched; the wind whistled; it was not pleasant, but it was going upward, and away to Egypt, it knew; and that was why its eyes shone, till it seemed as if a spark flew out of them.

"Quack — ack!"

The body was dead, the Toad was killed. But the spark out of its eyes, what became of *that?*

The sunbeam took it; the sunbeam bore away the jewel from the head of the Toad. Whither?

You must not ask the Naturalist; rather ask the Poet. He will tell it you as a fairy tale; and the Caterpillar is in it, and the Stork family is in it. Think, the Caterpillar will be changed, and become a beautiful butterfly!

The Stork family will fly over mountains and seas far away to Africa, and yet find the shortest way home again to the Danish land, to the same spot, to the same roof! Yes, it is all nearly too much like a fairy tale, — and yet it is true. You may fairly ask the Naturalist about the truth of it; he will admit *that*, and, indeed, you know it yourself, for you have seen it.

But the jewel in the Toad's head? Look for it in the sun; look at it if you can.

The splendor is too strong. We have not yet eyes that can look into all the glories which God hath revealed; but some day we shall have them, and that will be the most beautiful fairy tale of all, for we ourselves shall be in it.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor, who thought so very much of grand new clothes that he spent all his money upon them, that he might be very fine. He did not care about his soldiers; he did not care to see the play, or to drive in the woods, except to show his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, "He is in council," so they always said of him, "The Emperor is in the clothes-closet."

In the great city in which he lived it was always very merry; every day came many strangers; one day two rogues came: they gave themselves out as weavers, and said they knew how to weave the finest stuff any one could fancy. Not only were their colors and patterns, they said, very beautiful, but the clothes made of the stuff had the wonderful quality that they could not be seen by any one who was unfit for the office he held, or was too stupid for anything.

"Those would be capital clothes!" thought the Emperor. "If I wore those, I should be able

to find out what men in my empire were not fit for the places they have; I could tell the clever from the dunces. Yes, the stuff must be woven for me at once!" And he gave the two rogues a great deal of cash in hand, that they might begin their work without delay.

As for them, they put up two looms, and made as if they were working; but they had nothing at all on their looms. They at once called for the finest silk and the costliest gold; this they put into their own pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how far they have got on with the stuff," thought the Emperor. But he felt quite uneasy when he thought that one who was stupid or not fit for his office could not see it. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself; still he thought he had better first send some one else to see how matters stood. All the people in the city knew what peculiar power the stuff had, and all were anxious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbors were.

"I will send my honest old Minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he has sense, and no one knows his place better than he."

Now the good old Minister went out into the hall where the two rogues sat working at the empty looms.

"Mercy on us!" thought the old Minister, and he opened his eyes wide. "I cannot see anything at all!" But he did not say this.

Both the rogues begged him to be so good as to come nearer, and asked if the colors and the patterns were not pretty. Then they pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old Minister went on opening his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing.

"Mercy!" thought he, "suppose I am really stupid! I never thought that, and not a soul must know it. Suppose I am not fit for my office! No, it will never do for me to tell that I could not see the stuff."

"You don't say anything of it?" said one, as he went on weaving.

"Oh, it is charming, — quite enchanting!" said the old Minister, as he peered through his glasses. "What a fine pattern, and what colors! Yes, I shall tell the Emperor that I am very much pleased with it."

"Well, we are glad of that," said both the weavers; and then they named the colors, and explained the strange pattern. The old Minister listened closely, that he might be able to repeat it when he came to the Emperor. And he did so.

Now the rogues asked for more money, and silk and gold; they wanted it all for weaving.

They put all into their own pockets, and not a thread was put upon the loom; but they kept by it as before, and wove at the empty loom.

The Emperor soon sent again another honest officer of the court, to see how the weaving was going on, and if the stuff would soon be ready. He fared just like the first: he looked and looked, but, as there was nothing to be seen but the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Is not that a pretty piece of stuff?" asked the two rogues; and they showed and made clear the handsome pattern which was not there at all.

"I am not stupid!" thought the man: "it must be my good office, for which I am not fit. That would be queer enough, but I must not let it be noticed." And so he praised the stuff which he did not see, and said how pleased he was with the beautiful colors and charming pattern. "Yes, it is enchanting," he told the Emperor.

All the people in the town talked of the gorgeous stuff.

Now, the Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still upon the loom. With a whole crowd of chosen men, among whom were also the two honest statesmen who had already been there, he went to the two cunning rogues, who were weaving with might and main without fibre or thread.

"Is not that splendid?" said the two honest statesmen. "Does your Majesty see what a pattern it has and what colors?" And then they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that the others could see the stuff.

"What 's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can see nothing at all! That is terrible. Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me." "Oh, it is very pretty!" he said aloud. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded in a contented way, and gazed at the empty loom, for he would not say that he saw nothing. The whole crowd whom he had with him looked and looked, but they got nothing more out of it than all the rest; but, like the Emperor, they said, "Oh, that is very pretty!" and they begged him to have some clothes made of this new, pretty stuff, and to wear them for the first time in the great procession that was to take place. "It is splendid, excellent!" went from mouth to mouth, and they all were like one person in the way they talked. The Emperor gave each of the rogues a ribbon to wear in his buttonhole, and gave them the title of Imperial Court Weavers.

The whole night before the morning on which the procession was to take place, the rogues were up, and kept more than sixteen candles

burning. The people could see that they were hard at work upon the Emperor's new clothes. They made believe take the stuff down from the loom; they made cuts in the air with great shears; they sewed with needles without thread; and at last they said, "Now the clothes are ready!"

The Emperor came himself with his noblest cavaliers; and the two rogues lifted up one arm as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cape!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web: one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the beauty of it."

"Yes," said all the cavaliers; but they could not see anything, for there was nothing.

"Will your Imperial Majesty be so good as to take off your clothes?" said the rogues; "then we will put on you the new clothes here in front of the great mirror."

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the rogues pretended to put on him each new robe as it was ready; they wrapped him about and they tied and they buttoned, and they worked hard, and the Emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"Oh, how well they look! how nicely they fit!" said all. "What a pattern! what colors! That *is* a splendid dress!"

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be borne above your Majesty in the procession!" said the head Master of the Ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the Emperor. "Does it not suit me well?" And then he turned again to the mirror, for he wanted it to look as if he saw all his finery.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stooped down with their hands toward the floor, just as if they were picking up the train; then they held it up in the air. They did not dare to let it be seen that they could see nothing.

So the Emperor went in procession under the rich canopy, and all the people in the streets and at the windows said, "How fine the Emperor's new clothes are! what a train he has to his mantle! how well it fits him!" No one would let it be seen that he could see nothing, for that would have shown that he was not fit for his office, or was very stupid. No clothes of the Emperor's had ever had such a success as these.

"But he has nothing on!" said a little child.

"Mercy on us! Just hear that innocent voice!" said his father; and one whispered to another what the child had said.

"He has nothing on; there's a little child here says he has nothing on."

"That 's so! he has nothing on!" said the whole people at last. That touched the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought within himself, "I must go through with the procession." And so he held himself a little higher, and the chamberlains marched and carried the train, but there was no train.

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

THE biggest green leaf in all the land is certainly the burdock leaf. Put one in front of your stomach and it 's just like an apron, and if you lay it upon your head in a rain-storm, it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is so very, very big. A burdock never grows alone: where there is one tree there are several more. It 's splendid to behold! and all this splendor is snail's meat, — the great white snails, which the grand people in old times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them they would say, "H'm, how good that is!" for they had the idea that it tasted well. These snails lived on burdock leaves, and that 's why burdocks were sown.

Now there was an old estate, on which people ate snails no longer. The snails had died out, but the burdocks had not. They grew and grew in all the walks and on all the beds — one could hardly make way against them; there was a real forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or plum tree; but for this, nobody would have thought a garden had been there.

Everything was burdock, and among the burdocks lived the two last old, very old snails.

They did not know themselves how old they were, but they could very well remember that there had been a great many more of them, that they were from a foreign family, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from home, but they knew that there was something in the world called the manor-house, and that there one was boiled, and one became black, and was laid upon a silver dish; but what was done afterward they did not know. Moreover, they could not think what it might be to be boiled and laid upon a silver dish; but it was sure to be fine, and quite grand! Neither the June bug, nor the toad, nor the earthworm, whom they asked about it, could tell them anything, for none of their own kind had ever been boiled and laid on silver dishes.

The old white snails were the most famous in the world; they knew that! The forest was there for their sake, and the manor-house too, so that they might be boiled and laid on silver dishes.

They lived alone a happy life, and as they had no children, they had taken a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. But the little thing would not grow, for it was

only a common snail, though the snail-mother seemed to think she could see how it grew. And when the father could not see it, she asked him to feel the little snail's shell, and he felt it, and acknowledged that she was right.

One day there was a hard rain.

"Hear, how it goes, rum-dum-dum! rum-dum-dum! on the burdock leaves," said the Father Snail.

"That 's what I call drops," said the mother. "It 's coming straight down the stalks. You 'll see it will be wet here directly. I 'm only glad that we have our good houses, and that the little one has his own. There has been more done for us than for any other creature; one can see very plainly that we are the grand folks of the world! We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us: I should like to know how far it reaches, and what lies beyond it."

"There 's nothing beyond," said the Father Snail; "there can be no place better than home; I have nothing at all to wish for."

"Well," said the mother, "I should like to be taken to the manor-house and boiled and laid upon a silver dish; that has been done to all our forefathers, and you may be sure there 's nothing finer than that."

"The manor-house has perhaps fallen in," said

the Father Snail, "or the forest of burdocks may have grown over it, so that people can't get out at all. You need not be in a hurry — but you always hurry so, and the little one is beginning just the same way. Has he not been creeping up that stalk these three days? I get a headache when I look up at him."

"You must not scold him," said the Mother Snail. "He crawls very steadily. We shall have much joy in him; and we old people have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought of this: where shall we get a wife for him? Don't you think that farther in the wood there may be some more of our kind?"

"There may be black snails there, I think," said the old fellow, — "black snails without houses! but they're too vulgar. And they're vain, for all that. But we can give the errand to the ants: they run to and fro, as if they had business; they're sure to know of a wife for our little snail."

"I certainly know the most beautiful of brides," said one of the ants; "but I fear she would not do, for she is the Queen!"

"That does not matter," said the two old Snails. "Has she a house?"

"She has a castle!" replied the Ant, — "the most beautiful ant's castle, with seven hundred passages."

"Thank you," said the Mother Snail; "our boy shall not go into an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we'll give the errand to the white gnats; they fly far about in rain and sunshine, and they know the burdock wood, inside and outside."

"We have a wife for him," said the Gnats. "A hundred man-steps from here a little snail with a house is sitting on a gooseberry bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to marry. It's only a hundred man-steps from here."

"Yes, let her come to him," said the old people. "He has a whole burdock forest, and she has only a bush."

And so they brought the little maiden snail. It took eight days for her to come, but that was just the way one could see that she was of the right kind.

And then they had a wedding. Six glow-worms lighted as well as they could: except for that, all went very quietly, for the old snail people could not bear feasting and merry-making. But a capital speech was made by the Mother Snail. The father could not speak, he was so much moved. Then they gave the young couple the whole burdock forest for a portion, and said what they had always said, namely, — that it was the best place in the world, and that if they lived soberly and properly and behaved them-

selves they would some day be taken with their children to the manor-house, and boiled black, and laid upon a silver dish; and when the speech was finished, the old people crept into their houses and never came out again, for they slept.

The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a large family. But they were never boiled and never put into silver dishes, so they made up their minds that the manor-house had fallen in, and that all the people in the world had died out. As nobody denied this, they must have been right; and the rain fell upon the burdock leaves to play the drum for them; and the sun shone to color the burdock forest for them; and they were happy, very happy — the whole family was happy, uncommonly happy!

THE CANDLES.

THERE was a great Wax-light that knew well enough what it was.

"I am born in wax, and moulded in a form," it said. "I give more light and burn a longer time than any other light. My place is in the chandelier, or silver candlestick."

"That must be a charming life!" said the Tallow-candle. "I am only of tallow, — only a tallow dip; but then, I comfort myself, it is always better than to be a mere taper, that is dipped only two times: I am dipped eight times, to get a decent thickness. I'm satisfied. It would, to be sure, be finer and luckier still to have been born in wax, and not in tallow; but one does n't fix himself in this world. They are put in great rooms, and in glass candlesticks. I live in the kitchen, — but that is a good place, too: they get up all the dishes in the house there."

"But there is something that is more important than eating!" said the Wax-candle. "Good company, — to see them shine, and shine your-

self. There is a ball here this evening. Now I and all my family are soon to be sent for."

Scarcely was this said, than all the Wax-lights were sent for, — but the Tallow-candle too. The mistress took it in her delicate hand, and carried it out into the kitchen; there stood a little boy with a basket that was full of potatoes, and a few apples were in it too. The good lady had given all these to the poor boy.

"Here is a candle for you, my little friend," said she: "Your mother sits up and works far into the night, — she can use this."

The lady's little daughter stood by her; and when she heard the words "far into the night," she said eagerly, "And I 'm going to sit up till night, too! We 're going to have a ball, and I 'm to wear big red bows for it."

How her face shone! yes, that was happiness! no wax-light could shine like the child's eyes.

"That is a blessed thing to see," thought the Tallow-candle. "I shall never forget it, and certainly it seems to me there can be nothing more." And so the Candle was laid in the basket under the cover, and the boy took it away.

"Where am I going to now?" thought the Candle. "I shall be with poor folks, perhaps not once get a brass candlestick; but the Wax-light is stuck in silver, and sees the finest folks! What can there be more delightful than to be a

light among fine folks? That 's my lot, — tallow, not wax."

And so the Candle came to the poor people, a widow with three children, in a little, low room, right over opposite the rich house.

"God bless the good lady for what she gave!" said the mother; "it is a splendid candle, — it can burn till far into the night."

And the Candle was lighted.

"Pugh!" it said. "That was a horrid match she lighted me with. One hardly offers such a thing as that to a wax-light, over at the rich house."

There also the wax-lights were lighted, and shone out over the street. The carriages rumbled up to the rich house with the guests for the ball, dressed so finely; the music struck up.

"Now they 're beginning over there," felt the Tallow-candle, and thought of the little rich girl's bright face, that was brighter than all the wax-lights. "That sight I never shall see any more."

Then the smallest of the children in the poor house came — she was a little girl — and put her arms round her brother and sister's necks; she had something very important to tell, and must whisper it.

"We 're going to have this evening, — just think of it, — we 're going to have this evening

warm potatoes!" and her face beamed with happiness. The Candle shone right at her, and saw a pleasure, a happiness, as great as was in the rich house, where the little girl said, "We are going to have a ball this evening, and I shall wear some great red bows."

"Is it such a great thing to get warm potatoes?" thought the Candle. "Well, here is just the same joy among the little things!" and it sneezed [1] at that, — that is, it sputtered, and more than that no tallow-candle could do. The table was spread, the potatoes were eaten. Oh, how good they tasted! it was a real feast; and then each got an apple besides, and the smallest child sang the little verse, —

"Now thanks, dear Lord, I give to Thee,
That Thou again hast fillèd me. Amen."

"Was not that said prettily?" asked the little girl.

"You must n't ask that, or say it," said the mother. "You should only thank the good God, who has filled you."

And the little children went to bed, gave a good-night kiss, and fell asleep right away; and the mother sat till far into the night, and sewed, to get a living for them and herself; and from

[1] In Danish popular talk, to sneeze at a thing is the same as to nod assent.

the rich house the lights shone, and the music sounded. The stars twinkled over all the houses, over the rich and over the poor, just as clear, just as kindly.

"That was in truth a rare evening," thought the Tallow-candle. "Do you think the wax-lights had any better time in their silver candle-sticks? that I 'd like to know before I am burnt out!"

And it thought of the happy children's faces: the two alike happy, the one lighted by wax-light, the other by tallow-candle.

Yes, that is the whole story.

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